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FAIRFIELD'S FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF
BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

**EVERY INCH A BOY;
OR, DOING HIS LEVEL BEST.** *By A SELF-MADE MAN.*

AND OTHER STORIES



Perched, like a flock of crows, on the nearby fence, the boys enjoyed themselves in various ways at Dick's expense. At last one boy threw a clod of earth which knocked off his hat. His tormentors uttered a shout of glee.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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— OR —

DOING HIS LEVEL BEST

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES OUR HERO AND OTHERS.

*FLOYD COIT
NY SOUTH OF SELIC*

Joe King, a roughly dressed boy, with a freckled face, car-rotty hair, and a big mouth that seemed to be affected with a perpetual grin, was humming a tune.

He was sorting over and repairing some deep-sea fishing lines in a small, low-roofed shed, that was odorous of fish, adjoining a plain, weather-scarred cottage, whose long, sloping roof, looking seaward, was painted with a fine, saline dust.

A strong, healthy, girlish voice sang out mockingly, just outside the door that fronted on the beach where the calm, sunlit waters of the broad Atlantic Ocean kissed the hard white sand of the Maine seashore.

"Hello, Polly!" shouted Joe, eagerly. "Why don't you come in?"

A loud laugh was the response, and then Joe heard the girl talking to somebody.

"Polly!" roared Joe, after listening with a deepening frown for a moment, "who's that you're talkin' to?"

A laughing nut-brown face was thrust in at the doorway, and a pair of cherry-red lips made a grimace at the freckle-faced youth.

"Wouldn't you like to know, Mister King?"

"Aren't you goin' to tell me, Polly Pritchard?" asked Joe, impatiently.

"Tell you!" she exclaimed, with dancing eyes. "Well, I should think not. Can't I have a beau without being obliged to tell who he is?"

"A beau!" ejaculated Joe, angrily. "It's that Bige Parker. I know it is."

"Well, suppose it is, Mister Joe King?"

"What right has he to be taggin' after you?"

"Suppose I choose to let him; and suppose I like to have him? What do you say to that, Mister King?"

"I'll just give him the biggest lickin' ever he had, you see if I don't," replied Joe, doubling up his fists, and shaking them belligerently at the side of the shed, on the other side of which he supposed Bige Parker was standing.

Polly Pritchard laughed, and then Joe saw a sunburned hand and an arm encased in a checked shirtsleeve steal around Polly's waist, and the girl didn't seem to object in the least but rather appeared to like it.

That was the last straw.

Joe sprang up with a roar like that of a mad bull, fired the fishing lines aside, and with blood in his eyes, made a dash for the door.

Miss Pritchard screamed and bounded a yard away while

Joe, with his fists clenched for immediate action, sprang outside and—confronted the laughing face and stalwart form of his particular friend, Dick Dallas.

"Hello, Joe," grinned Dick, with a sidelong glance at Polly, "busy as usual, eh?"

"Oh, it's you, is it? Bet your life I'm busy."

"What are you doing?"

"Fixin' up the lines a little for the old man."

"I thought you was filing an old saw," chuckled Dick, while Polly covered her head with her check apron and fairly shook with smothered laughter.

"Filin' an old saw!" retorted Joe, suspiciously. "What do you mean?"

"Well, Polly and I heard a peculiar noise issuing from the shed as we came up and she started to imitate it, when—"

"Why, that was me singin'."

"Singing!" grinned Dick.

"Yes, singin'! Ain't I got a good voice?"

"Sure. You've got a fine voice—for peddling fish around the village."

"Oh, you get out! I can sing all right."

"Did anybody ever tell you that you could?"

"No, they didn't. Say, what are you tryin' to give me, Dick Dallas? And you, Polly Pritchard, what are you laughin' at?"

Polly made another face at him, and laughed all the harder.

"Where did you meet Polly, Dick?" asked Joe, curiously.

"Coming from Mrs. Parker's," chuckled Dick.

"What!" roared Joe, with an indignant look at Polly.

"Your ma sent me over to Mrs. Parker's to get a pan she borrowed t'other day; but she wasn't at home. Nobody but Bige," said the girl with an arch look.

"Bige Parker! I'd like to get hold of him."

"What for?" asked Dick, slyly.

"I'd punch his head for him," said Joe, beginning to square off at an imaginary antagonist.

"Don't be too sure of that, Joe," smiled Dick. "I hear Bige is takin' sparring lessons from Nate Peaseley on purpose to be ready for you when he meets you."

"I don't care if he is," snorted Joe. "I can lick him, anyway."

"Oh, dear! I am so hungry!" said Polly at this juncture.

"I am glad of it," replied Joe.

"Bige Parker wanted to give me a great thick slice of bread and butter; but I knew there was somebody at home," glancing coquettishly at Joe, "who could spread bread and butter better than he."

"Did you, Polly? You just keep still, then, and I'll bring you a slice."

Thus speaking, Joe King ran into the cottage to get the slice of bread and butter for Polly.

"Say, Polly," grinned Dick, "why do you tease Joe so much? You know you like him better than Bige Parker."

"How do you know I do?" replied Polly, saucily. "Maybe I like you better'n any one."

"It's my opinion you're a coquette, Polly," laughed Dick.

"Me! Why, I never thought of such a thing," smiled the girl, glancing admiringly at the good-looking tanned features of Dick Dallas.

Dick was an undisputed favorite with all the girls in the neighborhood, and there wasn't one but would have gone wild with delight to be able to parade him around as her own particular "steady."

The boy, however, liked all the girls equally well apparently, for he distributed his society among them with strict impartiality.

He was an orphan, who had wandered into that part of the State of Maine from no place in particular, as far as any one knew, or could find out.

Farmer Richardson had hired him when he applied for a temporary job one day three years before, and had kept him on steady ever since.

The old farmer had taken a great fancy to the bright and enterprising boy, and insisted that Dick should consider the Richardson farm his home as long as he chose to stay.

He treated Dick so well, letting him attend school for the full term, and granting him many other privileges not usually accorded by farmers even to their own sons, that Dick made no effort to sever such pleasant connections.

He fully appreciated Farmer Richardson's kindness and endeavored to return it by working like a Trojan on the farm, so that the farmer lost nothing by his fair and square treatment of the boy to whom he paid a certain regular stipened.

Lately, however, Dick had drawn a portion of his wages, and, through Farmer Richardson, had purchased a certain half acre of unproductive land with a miserable shanty on it.

Here he spent a portion of his time digging holes in the ground.

Whatever purpose he had in doing that no one could find out from him.

As the land lay alongside of the road leading from the village to the shore his mysterious occupation could not long remain a secret.

The boys in the neighborhood were naturally among the first to pry into the purpose that occasioned such apparently useless labor.

Every time one or more of them passed along the road when he was at work they would stop and ask him what he was doing.

"Digging holes," was his invariable and non-committal reply.

"What for?" was their natural query.

"For exercise," was all they could get out of him.

As he could get all the exercise and more than he needed on Farmer Richardson's place, this evasive answer was not considered at all satisfactory by the boys.

After talking the matter over between themselves they decided that he was hunting for something in the ground, but just what that something could be puzzled them not a little.

Finally they unanimously concluded that Dick had dreamed that there was money hidden somewhere in that half-acre plot and that he was looking for it.

This seemed so ridiculous to them that they lost no chance to gibe him on the subject.

Dick paid no attention to their railery, but kept right on digging holes until the ground near the shanty and close by the road looked as if it had been deeply ploughed.

A great many of the girls, actuated by a curiosity that is never absent from the sex, walked down from the village to that particular field to see the holes.

Then when they met Dick they wanted him to own up the truth, but he wouldn't.

He was as silent as the fabled Sphinx on the subject, and more than half the girls began to believe that his only object in digging the holes was to tantalize the boys, and keep their curiosity on edge.

Even his particular friend, Joe King, was as much in the dark, or professed to be, as the rest.

As Dick had no regular time for digging the boys couldn't always catch him at this enigmatical occupation, but at last the news flew about that he had been seen there on moonlight nights working away to beat the band.

Then the whole neighborhood became satisfied that he had some powerful object in view, and the most powerful object they could think of was buried treasure.

CHAPTER II.

DICK FINDS A BRASS-BOUND TREASURE BOX.

Beyond a doubt Polly Pritchard thought a heap of Joe King—she was an orphan and had been raised by Fisherman King and his good wife—but it wouldn't have taken much encouragement from Dick Dallas to have won her away from his friend, if he had been so disposed.

Dick, however, had no such thoughts.

No one girl he knew appealed to him more than another, and no boy had any real cause to feel jealous of him.

Joe came out of the house with a great slice of bread and butter which he handed to Polly with a complacent smile.

She seated herself on top of a wicker lobster pot and began to eat it with great relish.

"Do you know what I'd do if I was rich?" said Polly.

"What would you do?" asked Dick.

"I'd have lots of fine clothes, like the visitors who come here in the summer; and loads of jewels; and a big house with a buffalo on top—"

"A what on top?" said Dick.

"A buffalo—one of them little square things with glass winders."

"Oh, you mean a cupola," laughed the boy.

"Is that what you call it? Then I'd have a pizarro, and a miranda, and all that. I'd have a scrumptious place, and make all the other girls turn green with envy."

Polly swung her feet to and fro in great glee as she pictured what she liked.

"You don't want much, Polly. I feel sorry for your pocket-book, Joe, if you should marry this extravagant young lady," said Dick.

"Ho!" replied Joe. "She don't mean that."

"Yes, I do," nodded Polly in a very positive way. "And another thing, I'd have molasses on my bread."

"You can have that now," said Joe, running into the house again.

"Now ain't he obligin'?" she remarked to Dick. "I do like to be waited on. And there's plenty to wait on me, for between Joe and Bige Parker I'm very comfortably settled."

"Here you are, Polly," cried Joe, running up with a small molasses jug in his hand and pouring molasses over her bread.

"Oh, ain't that sweet!" she cried, licking the molasses where it ran over the edge of the crust.

"I say, Polly, what did Bige Parker say to you?" asked Joe.

"Oh, lots of sweet things," she answered, winking at Dick.

"Blame him!" ejaculated Joe.

"Let me see—what did he say?" said Polly, cocking her head on one side like a sparrow. "He said that when I was near the sky seemed filled with beautiful rainbows. Wasn't that poetical?"

"I'd like to paint a rainbow around his eyes," roared Joe.

"That the sand seemed like shining gold when I walked upon it," she continued.

"I'd like to stuff his throat with it."

"That the water—"

"Oh, blame the water! I'm goin' right now to Bige Parker's house to punch his head," cried Joe, dashing into the shed after his jacket and hat. "Come on, Dick. You can be referee."

Polly screamed, jumped off the lobster pot, and seized Joe by the sleeve.

"You shan't go to Bige Parker's. He'd knock you into the middle of the road, and I won't have you hurt."

"Don't you stop me, Polly Pritchard," said Joe, struggling to get away from her detaining grasp. "My blood is up. I'm on the warpath. Nothin' 'll satisfy me but to lick Bige Parker."

"Then you'll have to wait till to-morrow, for Bige has gone to Rockland by this time," said Dick.

"He has, eh? Then that's saved his life. Now I want you to understand, Polly, that I won't have him sneakin' around after you. Where are you goin' now, Dick?"

"I'm going to dig a few more holes on my property up the road," grinned Dick.

"How many more holes do you expect to dig there?" asked Joe, looking at him curiously.

"I couldn't tell you, Joe. Maybe a dozen; maybe a hundred."

"And you really expect to find something through that paper you discovered in the old shanty before you bought the ground?"

"If I didn't you wouldn't expect me to be fooling away my spare time with a shovel, would you?"

"That's right," admitted Joe. "It's too bad the directions wasn't plainer, for so far you've had a lot of work for nothing."

"You see the rain got at the paper where it was hidden in the wall, and it blotted out some of the writing."

"Well, I hope you'll find something to pay you for all your trouble, Dick," said Joe. "I'll come over and give you a hand in a little while after I get these lines straightened out."

"All right, Joe. I'd be glad to have you. So-long, Polly, till I see you again. You want to be good to Joe, or I'll have to give you a talking to."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the girl, making Dick a mock curtsy.

The boy raised his old straw hat gallantly and started off for the road.

About half a mile from the seashore he came to his half-acre of sterile ground that Farmer Richardson had bought for him for a mere song.

The old shanty, in whose walls Dick had one day accidentally found an old mildewed piece of paper which vaguely indicated the presence of a buried box of money somewhere within a hundred feet to the south of the building, faced directly on the road with a fence running away from it in either direction.

There was no one in sight, and the afternoon sunshine lay like a golden halo over the rural landscape.

Dick pushed the crazy door open and entered the shanty.

Going to a certain corner he lifted a board and drew out the shovel he had been using to turn up the ground outside.

Replacing the board, he walked out by the rear entrance, and was presently digging a fresh hole in the sod.

He had dug down about three feet in this spot when his shovel met with an obstruction.

"By gracious!" he exclaimed excitedly. "I believe I've struck something at last."

He threw out a few more spadefuls of earth, and sounded the obstruction again.

It gave out a dull sound in one place and a muffled ringing noise in another.

"I'll bet that's the box I'm after," he cried, digging out more soil.

In a few minutes he had cleared the earth away sufficiently to be able to make out that there was a sort of brass-bound box down in the hole.

"By George! That's the treasure for a fact. Now to get it out. I wonder if it's heavy?"

He had to enlarge the hole now before he could get at the box so as to lift it, and he lost no time in getting about it.

The dirt flew as it had never flown before in that field, and Dick was hot and perspiring after twenty minutes of this kind of exercise.

However, he had made the hole twice as big as it was before, and had cleared away all the dirt from the top of the box.

Dick, looking down, could see that it was an old-fashioned chest, not very large, but evidently very strong and compact.

"That's just what a man would stow his wealth away in. I wonder who he was? A pirate who wandered up in this neighborhood, or some chap who buried his money here years and years ago because he thought it would be safer in the ground than in one of those State banks that afterwards went to smash and made beggars, I've heard, of thousands of people who were well off up to that time?"

Dick didn't waste any time trying to figure out who the owner of the box was, or his motive in placing it three feet deep in the field.

He recommenced the now delightful labor of bringing it to the surface where he would be able to carry it away to the Richardson farm and open it at his leisure.

It was not an easy job, for the box was pretty heavy, and he had to do a lot more digging before he could loosen its hold on the ground.

"I wish Joe was here," he breathed. "He'd give me a hand with this thing."

He walked to the fence and looked in the direction of the shore, but there was no sign of his friend anywhere along the road.

He returned to the hole and dug a while longer till he could

get a good grasp on the handle at one end of the box, then he tugged away at it till he raised it on its other end.

By making a kind of toboggan slide he at length succeeded in landing the box on the surface, where it lay between two mounds of earth, concealed from the road.

"Gee whiz!" he exclaimed, wiping the sweat from his forehead, "but it's heavy. It must be filled with gold. If it is, there ought to be a good many thousand dollars packed away inside. I'd never be able to carry this any distance alone, and I doubt very much if Joe and I could be able to get over to the farm without a wheeled conveyance of some kind. By Jove! I have it. Joe can fetch up his fishcart. That will be just the thing. I wish he'd show up. Won't he be surprised when he sees this box?"

As Dick stood, shovel in hand, fanning himself with his old hat, a crowd of the village boys suddenly hove in sight, coming down the road.

Dick counted eight of them, and their presence at that particular moment greatly annoyed him.

"The whole country will know now that I've found a treasure trove," he muttered, in a tone of disgust.

CHAPTER III.

THE BRASS-BOUND BOX DISAPPEARS.

The boys soon caught sight of Dick in the field, and with a great shout the whole crowd started for the shanty on a run, like a lot of howling dervishes.

Dick watched their approach with a feeling of resentment.

Their presence was decidedly *de trop*, as the French call it.

They struck the fence in a bunch, and several of them took their seats on the top rail, while two climbed over and backed up against the shanty.

Dick was surprised that they made no attempt to come nearer.

He expected to see them gather all around him, as they had often done before.

It was soon apparent that they had determined on a new line of action toward the boy who had so long puzzled them with his hole-digging.

"Hello, Dick!" shouted one boy. "How are they coming?"

A roar of derisive laughter went up at this remark.

"How many holes have you dug to-day?" another wanted to know.

"Going to plant potatoes?" inquired a third.

"Or cabbages?" asked a fourth.

"Or telegraph poles?" suggested a fifth.

"Found any money yet?" asked another, whereat the whole mob yelled derisively once more.

Dick stood and watched them coolly, without saying a word.

"Say, what'll you give us to help you out?" laughed the son of a neighboring farmer.

"That's right. Speak quickly, for we're bound for the beach, and time is money with us," spoke up the son of the village carpenter.

Although every eye was focused on Dick, not one of the boys appeared to have noticed the box.

It might have been that they took it for a mound of dirt, for it was thickly covered with the clayey soil.

Perched like a flock of crows on the nearby fence, the boys enjoyed themselves in various ways at Dick's expense.

At last one boy threw a clod of earth which knocked off his hat.

His tormentors uttered a shout of glee.

Dick took their sarcasm with great good nature, and was content to endure it as long as they kept their distance.

Once started in the bombarding line, every boy took a turn or two at pelting Dick with soft clods of earth, shrieking with delight when the missiles landed on some part of his body.

Dick dodged the shower as best he could, but made no effort to return the fire.

Suddenly the boys deserted the fence with one accord, after giving Dick a farewell shout, and started down the road toward the beach as hard as they could run.

"Gee! I'm glad they're gone. I don't see how they failed to see that box. I'm mighty pleased they didn't, for I don't want the world to know that I've found a box of money."

Dick went to the fence and looked for Joe once more, but he wasn't in sight.

"Maybe he isn't coming. His father may have got back and won't let him off. I'll have to hide this box in the shanty somewhere until I can remove it to the farm."

Dick found it no light task to drag the box even such a short distance as the building, and when he got it there at last he was greatly puzzled where to secrete it.

There was a loft in the place, but it was utterly out of his power to drag it up there.

Finally he decided to dig a shallow hole outside the shanty, drop the box into it and cover it up.

Looking up and down the road, and around the field, and seeing no one in sight, Dick put that plan into execution.

"It will be as safe there as anywhere," he said to himself, after smoothing the soil down. "Now I'll go back to Joe's home and see if he can bring his fishcart and help me carry the box to the farm."

Putting his shovel away, he started for the seashore.

Hardly had he set off before a heavily bearded, seafaring man, who had been furtively watching his actions from the window of the loft ever since he began to dig, more than an hour before, descended the ladder to the ground floor of the shanty, and, after making sure that the boy was well on his way down the road, went outside and looked at the spot where Dick had buried the box.

"So this is where he concealed the box," muttered the stranger. "And he took it out of another hole yonder. I don't quite understand this business. However, that doesn't matter. The box looks as if it contained something of value. It was too heavy almost for that boy to handle. I wonder what's in it? Maybe silverware, or something of that sort. Perhaps it's the proceeds of a robbery. I wonder why he dug it up from one spot and then buried it in another? Looks suspiciously suggestive. Well, I shan't worry myself about that. I shall avail myself of this discovery to appropriate the box myself. Everything is fish that comes to my net. It was a lucky thing that I climbed into the loft of this old shack for a short snooze this afternoon, otherwise I should have missed this prize. Now, I wonder what he did with his shovel?"

The stranger went back into the shanty and looked around, but saw no shovel.

"He didn't take it away with him, that's certain, so he must have hidden it somewhere."

Making a close search of the premises, the bearded man finally discovered the loose board under which Dick had left the shovel.

"Ah, I've got it," he said, in a tone of satisfaction, as he pulled out the spade from its hiding-place. "Now to unearth the box and conceal it in a new spot where it will be safe until I can remove it to the island."

It didn't take the strange man long to dig up the brass-bound box.

"It is heavy," he muttered. "I'm afraid it will leave a track along the ground wherever I may drag it."

This was a difficulty he had not foreseen until that moment.

He tried to lift it so he could carry it by stages in his arms, but the task was beyond him.

There was no other way of removing it except by dragging it.

The man scratched his head and considered the problem.

Finally he went across the road, cut down two good-sized tree limbs, and carried them back with him to where the box lay.

Laying the limbs parallel to each other, he placed the box upon them, and then seizing the end of one in each hand he started to drag the box off in that fashion.

He was a big, strong man, and this plan succeeded very well with him.

He carried the box for some distance down the field, then went back for the shovel and dug a shallow hole for the chest.

He covered it up carefully, and then marked the spot so he would know it again.

Satisfied with his work, he returned to the shanty, filled up the other hole, and, removing as well as he could every trace of the departure of the box, he put the shovel back where he got it from and started off across the fields in the direction of the seashore.

He had been gone scarcely over five minutes when Dick and Joe came up the road, wheeling the fishcart before them.

"So you really think the box is full of gold?" said Joe, in an intensely interested tone.

"It must be, for it's terribly heavy for its size. The paper states that the box contains money, and I hardly think it is silver coin."

"You're a rich boy, then, at that rate. You can give up farming for good and start into some business for yourself."

"I suppose a fellow can do lots of things when he has money at his back."

"Bet your life he can. I wish I found some money."

"What would you do with it?"

"I'll tell you what I'd do with some of it. I'd buy Polly all the ice-cream and sweets she could eat, then she wouldn't have nothin' more to do with Bige Parker, and that would tickle me to death."

Dick laughed.

"It takes the girls to get the money out of the boys."

"I guess money was made to be spent on your best girl," grinned Joe. "Well, here we are at that old shanty of yours. We'll leave the cart here and drag the box out to it. How much do I get for helping you to carry your money-box over to the farm?"

"If it's full of gold I guess you'll get one hundred dollars, all right."

"One hundred dollars will suit me right down to the ground. It's more money than my old man has in cash, I'll bet. I'll bet that will make me solid with Polly and send Bige Parker to the right-about, for I don't believe he's got a hundred cents of his own in the world. What won't I do with that hundred dollars! Say, I'll paint the village red!" cried Joe, enthusiastically.

"You're talking ragtime, Joe. You'd better soak the bulk of it away in the village bank and leave it there till you're ready to marry Polly, if she'll have you."

"She'll have me fast enough if I can put Bige's nose out of joint."

"And you expect to do the trick by buying Polly everything in the sweet-stuff line she takes a fancy to, eh?"

"That's right."

"Then she'll bankrupt you. After she finds out you've spent all your money she might turn around and shake you for Bige."

"Do you think she would?" asked Joe, anxiously.

"No, I don't really think she would; but she might. Girls have been known to do that more than once. I think you stand the best show by making your money and letting her know that you have it and mean to hold on to it."

Dick had got the shovel out by this time, and he and Joe went to the spot where he had buried the box.

The boy began to dig with great vigor, for he was in a hurry to show the brass-bound box to his companion.

He dug down a foot, and then began to look perplexed when his spade failed to come into contact with the box.

"This is funny," he said, when he had dug nearly another foot.

"What's funny?" asked Joe, who was eagerly following his movements.

"It doesn't seem to me that the box was more than a foot deep."

"Maybe you're diggin' in the wrong place," suggested his companion.

"No," replied Dick, positively. "This is where I buried it."

"You've gone down more than two feet now."

"I know I have, and that's what is bothering me," he said, stopping and looking intently at the spot. "It couldn't be that any one came here while I was away after you, dug up the box and carried it off."

The very suspicion of such a catastrophe gave Dick the shivers.

But when he had dug down three feet without meeting the box, which he was positive he had concealed under only one foot of soil, he leaned against the side of the shanty like one who has met with a sudden and terrible misfortune.

"Joe," he gasped hoarsely, "somebody has been here and got away with that box. Somebody must have been watching me when I buried it. What shall I do?"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Joe, aghast at the words.

The two boys stood and stared at each other in utter dismay.

CHAPTER IV.

INTRODUCES JESSIE BROWN.

Finally Joe snatched the shovel away from Dick and dug for a yard around the spot, but had to give the matter up for a bad job.

"I guess some one was watching you when you buried it, and then got away with it while you were down after me," said Joe, sympathizing with his companion in his loss.

"Who could it be?" asked Dick.

"Gee! I'll never tell you."

"Well, he must have had a wagon, or he couldn't have carried it off."

"You didn't notice a wagon anywhere along the road, did you?"

"No. There wasn't a soul in sight when I left this place, and within half an hour you and I were back here. It's kind of mysterious to me."

"You don't think any of the boys piped the box off, then watched you bury it, and, when you had gone, dug it up and carried it off, do you?" asked Joe, suddenly.

"I hardly think so, Joe," replied Dick, after a moment's thought. "It would have been impossible for them to have got away with it without a cart of some kind."

They talked the matter over for some little time, but, as neither of them could throw any light upon the mystery of the box's disappearance, they had to give the problem up.

"Well, let's take your cart home, Joe," said Dick, in a dejected voice. "The box is gone, and that's all there is to it. It's hard luck, and no mistake. Somebody has got the benefit of all my trouble in finding it, and I shall probably never hear any more about it."

"It's a shame, so it is," replied Joe, who felt sorry for his companions, and disappointed, too, over the loss of the hundred dollars he had fondly counted on receiving himself.

It was dark when Dick returned to the farm, in a very disconsolate frame of mind.

Farmer Richardson noticed that something was wrong with him and asked what the trouble was.

Dick gave him an evasive answer, and went about the evening chores as if he had lost the only friend he had in the world.

He had locked the barn, and was about to cross the yard toward the house, when he saw a dark shadow appear slowly over the fence and then sink down beside it.

"What's that?" he asked himself, peering over at the motionless object.

He watched it a moment, and, seeing that it did not stir, he went over to find out what it was.

As he approached the spot he was astonished to discover, by the dim light afforded by the starlit sky, that the object was a female.

"My gracious!" he ejaculated under his breath. "Who is this, and what is she doing here?"

The girl or woman—he was not sure which—did not appear to notice his presence, but cowered down against the fence, as if hiding, with her face buried in her hands.

As he laid his hand on her shoulder she sprang up with a suppressed scream and shrank from him in terror.

He could see her face now, and it was the face of the loveliest girl he had ever had the fortune to meet in his life.

But it was white as death, and a hunted, appealing look dwelt in her beautiful eyes that went straight to Dick's heart.

"What is the matter?" he asked, in a sympathetic tone.

It was evident that she had mistaken him at first for some enemy, for now, recognizing in him a friend, she threw herself at his feet and, with outstretched arms, cried in appealing accents that thrilled him through and through:

"Save me, oh, save me!"

"Save you?" he answered in surprise. "Sure I will; but from what?"

"From him!"

"From him? Who do you mean?"

"Captain Harrup."

Dick knew every man, woman and child for miles around, but he had never heard of Captain Harrup.

"Cap'n Harrup!" he repeated, in a puzzled tone. "I don't remember—"

"He is the captain of the Firebrand, a Canadian liquor smuggler," she explained, in tremulous tones, with a fearsome look over her shoulder in the direction whence she had come, as if she expected to see her enemy appear at any moment.

"A Canadian liquor smuggler, eh?" answered Dick.

The boy had heard that French brandy and other dutiable liquors, which were expressly excluded from the State of Maine by the prohibition laws, was suspected of being landed occasionally along the coast in that neighborhood.

He knew that the government secret service men, and the county officials as well, were on the lookout for a certain craft which was believed to be engaged in the illegal traffic, and for sundry residents of the State who were supposed to be aiding and abetting the smugglers.

A considerable reward had been offered by both the State and county for information which would lead to the arrest and conviction of the offenders, but this far nothing had come of it.

"Yes, yes!" cried the fair unknown, in reply to the boy's ejaculation.

Dick scratched his head and looked at the girl dubiously.

"What is your name?" he asked her.

"Jessie Brown," she replied, in a voice that showed increased agitation.

"You are running away from this Cap'n Harrup, are you?"

"Yes, oh, yes! He has kept me a prisoner on his vessel and on an island near here for months."

"An island near here? Do you mean the Spindles?" asked Dick, eagerly.

"I don't know the name of it," wailed the girl.

"It must be that one. How far off shore is it?"

"I don't know—several miles."

"It is surrounded by reefs and rocks, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"And there is a basin or small harbor in the center of it?"

"Yes, yes."

"With two tall, white rocks at the entrance where the channel runs in?"

"Yes, I remember now."

"Those are the Spindles, and give the island its name. I know the place. I've fished for mackerel off there many times. It's a holy terror of a spot to land on, I've heard. At any rate, I never tried, because I couldn't find the true channel, and also because I didn't have any reason to do so. So this Cap'n Harrup you're talking about kept you a prisoner there?"

"Yes, oh, yes."

"Why?"

"Because he wants to marry me."

"Marry you! Why, you're only a girl! You don't look more than sixteen," said Dick, in surprise.

"That is my age."

"And he really wants to marry you?"

"He does; but I dislike and fear him," exclaimed the girl vehemently. "He is a bad and violent man, and I would sooner die than become his wife."

"Well, you've got away from him now, so you're safe."

"No, no. He is after me. He will drag me back and make me a prisoner again."

"I guess not, if you don't want to go back. What right has he to compel you to obey him?"

"He says he is my guardian."

"Is he really so?"

"I don't know. He took me away from a happy home in Canada, where I had been brought up from infancy, and led me to believe that through him I should be reunited to my father and mother, whose love I had never known."

"Never knew your father and mother?" ejaculated Dick, in surprise.

"No," she replied, weeping bitterly. "I was left, an infant, to the care of strangers when my parents went to England to recover some property, and never since have I heard from them. I was told that the steamer in which they embarked from Boston foundered at sea and all on board were lost. I grieved for them as dead until this man came and said that the story was false—that they were alive and well in Boston. He said they had searched for me for years in vain. He knew where they could be found and agreed to take me to them. I believed his story and accompanied him aboard his sloop, the Firebrand. Then when he had me in his power he refused to carry out his promise unless I would first become his wife. He had his reasons for wishing me to marry him—reasons he would not disclose to me. I would not agree, for I disliked and distrusted him, and so he kept me a prisoner. This afternoon, while he and his men were ashore here, I managed to make my escape from the cavern on the island, took a boat that lay by the shore, and rowed toward the coast. I landed just at dusk, and started for a cottage I saw not far away, when Captain Harrup came suddenly upon me. He swore a dreadful oath and tried to seize me; but I shrieked and fled among the trees and bushes that lined that part of the shore. He followed, with fearful threats upon his lips, but I hid myself in the woods and the gathering darkness favored my escape. But he is surely on my track, and will never let up until he finds me and drags me back to his vessel. He knows that I am acquainted with many of his secrets, and will strain every nerve to prevent me from getting away entirely. But I do not mean to betray him if he will only let me alone and tell me where I can find my father and mother," sobbed the girl.

"But you have already said enough to brand him with suspicion," said Dick.

"What have I said?" she asked, in wild terror.

"You have admitted that he is a Canadian liquor smuggler."

"Ah!" she exclaimed. "But you will not tell any one what

I said. Promise me that you will not," she cried entreatingly.

"Why should you want to shield a man who has, according to your account, treated you so shamefully?" asked Dick, in astonishment.

"Because I want to learn from him where I can find my dear parents."

"I am afraid he is not a man to be trusted. Better have him arrested, and when he is in jail, and without power to further injure you, he may be compelled to make terms with you."

Before the girl could make any reply to this, a stalwart, bearded man rose from behind the fence, which he cleared at a leap, and, rushing upon her with an exclamation of triumph, seized her by the arm.

"So I have caught you at last, eh?"

Jessie Brown uttered a thrilling scream and fainted dead away in his arms.

CHAPTER V.

INTRODUCES CAPTAIN HARRUP AND HIS MATE.

"Who are you?" demanded Dick, feeling that, after what he had learned from the hapless girl, he ought to make a fight in her behalf.

He instinctively asked the intruder that question, though he almost knew that the man was Captain Harrup.

"None of your business, young man, who I am," replied the newcomer, aggressively.

"Yes, it is my business," answered Dick, pluckily. "This girl claimed my protection."

"Your protection!" sneered the bearded intruder.

"Yes, my protection," replied Dick, sturdily. "Your name is Cap'n Harrup, I believe?"

The man gave a start, and glared balefully through the night at the boy.

"Who says it is?" he retorted, with a touch of defiance in his tone.

"This girl—Jessie Brown."

"Ha! You know her name, too."

"I do. She told me."

"And I suppose she told you she was running away from me—her lawful guardian, eh?"

"She did, though I don't believe you are her guardian."

"You don't?"

"No. If you were her real guardian, and thought anything of her, you wouldn't keep her a prisoner aboard your sloop, or on the Spindles."

"Ha! She told you that, too?"

"She did."

"She told you a lie, then," said Cap'n Harrup, fiercely.

"I'd rather take her word than yours," replied Dick, doggedly.

"You would?"

"That's what I said."

"What else did she tell you?" asked the captain, a bit anxiously.

"No matter what she told me. You'd better let her go, or there'll be something doing you won't like."

Holding the girl on one arm, Captain Harrup, with a fierce imprecation, drew a revolver and pointed it at Dick.

"Now, you young whelp! Answer my question, or I'll shoot you down where you stand. What else did she tell you?"

Dick saw that the captain had the drop on him, and, believing him to be desperate enough to carry out his threat, concluded that the wisest course was to answer the interrogation.

"She said you took her from her home in Canada on pretense of carrying her to her parents' home, and that when you got her in your power you refused to fulfill your promise until she married you."

"What else?"

"That's all, except she said she escaped from the Spindles late this afternoon and rowed herself to the shore in a small boat."

"Did she say anything about—"

The captain suddenly stopped, as if he thought better of uttering something that was on his mind.

"Are you sure that is all she told you?" he said in harsh tones.

"That was enough to show me what kind of a man you are," replied Dick.

Captain Harrup regarded the boy for a moment in silence.

He was in a quandary as to what course to pursue toward him.

He did not recognize Dick as the same boy he had watched

bury the brass-bound box that afternoon, which he himself had subsequently unearthed and hid in a different spot; but it would have mattered little if he had done so.

There was trouble, however, for him in Dick's presence and attitude.

The boy evidently intended to resist his intention of bearing the unconscious girl from the farm.

It is true it was in his power to kill or wound the lad, but he did not want to arouse the place by firing at him.

In what way could he prevent the plucky boy from obstructing his retreat?

While he was considering this weighty problem a third party appeared on the scene.

This was William Maddocks, his mate, who had been helping him search for the girl.

"Ha, Maddocks!" he exclaimed, with a sense of relief. "You have come at a lucky moment. I have caught the girl, but this young hayseed objects to my taking her away with me."

"What objection can he have?" asked the mate, striding forward and regarding Dick with some curiosity.

"He's got a Quixotic notion in his head that he must defend the young lady. She has been blabbing to him—"

"Ha!" cried Maddocks, fiercely. "Has she betrayed us?"

"I am not sure," replied Captain Harrup, "but I think not."

"But you said she had blabbed."

"I meant she had told this young monkey something about herself. She accused me of taking her away from her home in Canada and then keeping her a prisoner on board the Firebrand and at the Spindles."

"She told him that, eh?"

"So he admits."

"But are you sure she said nothing about—"

"Our business? I guess she didn't get the chance to say all she meant to. I caught her talking to this chap and choked her off mighty quick."

"Why, what's the matter with her now?"

"She's fainted," explained the captain.

The mate gave a dry chuckle.

"Then I guess you'd better carry her over to our rendezvous and have her taken off to the island."

"Such is my intention. I would not have waited so long in doing so, but this cub objected."

"Objected, did he?" said Maddocks, with an unpleasant laugh.

"She claimed his protection from me, he said."

"Oh, she did! That's pretty good, I must say. Come, young fellow—right-about face and march."

"Hold on, Maddocks. He might raise an alarm and cause us to be followed, which might lead to unpleasant results for us. You'd better lay hold of him and keep him quiet until I have had sufficient time to reach the old—"

"Hush!" warned the mate.

"Well, you know where I mean," replied Captain Harrup.

"I do. There is no need to name the place. You go on and leave me to attend to this youngster. I'll answer for it that he does not get away from me until I'm ready to let him go."

With those words Maddocks suddenly pounced upon Dick and backed him up against the fence.

"Now, don't let me hear a whisper out of your jaws, or something will happen that you won't like."

He spoke in a tone that showed he meant what he said, and Dick saw that he was quite helpless in his hands.

CHAPTER VI.

DICK AND JOE VISIT THE OLD RUINED CHURCH BY THE SHORE.

Captain Harrup uttered a satisfied laugh, raised Jessie Brown in his arms, and, clambering over the fence, disappeared in the gloom of the night.

Some minutes passed away, and the mate watched his prisoner like a cat does a mouse it is playing with.

The night was comparatively still, the silence being only broken by the croak of frogs in the nearby creek and the call of various night-birds in the distant wood.

From afar came the low, musical cadence of the surf breaking upon the shore, a mile or so distant.

Suddenly Dick and his captor heard some one coming up the lane whistling.

"Don't you dare open your mouth now, or I'll choke you!" said Mr. Maddocks in the boy's ear.

The whistle came closer.

Dick recognized in that whistle his friend Joe King.

Joe marched to the kitchen door of the farmhouse and knocked.

The hired girl came to the door.

She told the visitor, whom she knew well, in response to his query, that Dick hadn't come in from the barn yet, where he had gone immediately after tea.

So Joe started for the barn.

This was what Dick had been waiting for.

He suddenly grappled with the mate of the Firebrand and shouted for help.

Joe recognized his voice, and also that he was in trouble, and started to his assistance.

Maddocks soon found that the two sturdy lads he had to deal with were more than he could handle.

So, shaking them off, he sprang over the fence and vanished in the darkness.

"Follow me, Joe!" cried Dick, excitedly.

"What! After that fellow? What's the use?"

"Not after that man, but after another chap, the captain of the craft that is smuggling liquor into the State."

"What do you mean?" asked the mystified Joe.

"Never mind asking for an explanation now. I want you to help save the finest little girl in all the world from the clutches of a scoundrel."

"Who is the girl?" asked Joe, not a little astonished.

"I told you not to ask questions, but follow me. There isn't a moment to be lost if we're going to save her."

As Dick vaulted the fence and started off in the direction taken by Captain Harrup, Joe was compelled to follow him without any further explanation, or remain behind in the farmyard, which, of course, he would not for a moment think of doing.

Captain Harrup had had a good start, but, burdened as he was with the senseless form of Jessie Brown, Dick figured that it would take him some little time to reach the beach, and consequently he hoped to be able to overhaul him.

Dick also thought he had a clew to the captain's destination.

Captain Harrup had told his mate to hold on to Dick until he had time to reach the old— And there he was choked off by Maddocks.

Dick figured that he meant the old, dismantled church that stood a short distance back from the sea, on the edge of the ancient little churchyard, where the dead of the village had been buried for a hundred years back.

The sea had gradually encroached on this God's acre until now the church in question, which had been supplanted by a more modern building nearer the village, hung almost above the sea at high tide.

Nothing had been left in the ancient church when it was abandoned but a cracked bell in the crumbling steeple, and this could occasionally be heard tolling mournfully on stormy nights when the wind from the great ocean played about it.

So it was in the direction of the old church that Dick hurried, with Joe at his heels, as fast as they could make their way across the fields and through the wood in the dark.

The music of the surf grew louder as they drew nearer to the shore, and when they finally reached the beach they could see the white rollers rising and falling a few yards away.

So far Dick had seen nothing of Captain Harrup and the girl, or even of William Maddocks, and the boys, rather winded, relaxed their speed to a fast walk.

"What about this girl you want to save from a rascal, Dick? Who is she?"

"Well, her name is Jessie Brown. She came to the farm a little while ago, in an effort to escape from a man—he's the cap'n of a smuggling liquor craft called the Firebrand, who is persecuting her for some purpose. He has held her a prisoner aboard his sloop for some time. She escaped late this afternoon. However, he got on her track and came upon her while she was talking to me. I never would have allowed him to carry her away without a good fight, only he pulled a gun on me, and against that I couldn't do a thing."

"I should say you couldn't," replied Joe, with a wag of the head.

"Then that other chap, who seems to be a side partner of his, turned up, making it two to one against me. He grabbed me, pushed me up against the fence, and told the cap'n to make off with the girl while he kept me from following or giving an alarm. Then you turned up just in the nick of time to make it so warm for the rascal that he was glad to let me drop like a hot-cake."

"Then you mean to try and save this pretty Jessie Brown from that villainous skipper?" said Joe.

"That's exactly what I mean to do," replied Dick, determinedly.

"You said he was a smuggler, didn't you?"

"So the girl told me—a liquor smuggler. He must be the chap the government men have been after these three months past. I am satisfied that the Spindles is his rendezvous off the coast. And I believe the old church down by the burying-ground is used as a landing-place for the liquor brought ashore at night when the sloop is in this neighborhood. It's a wonder the revenue men haven't got on to that fact."

"That's so," replied Joe. "It would be a great thing for us if we could find out something that would lead to the detection of the smugglers, for there's a reward, as you know, offered for such information. I believe it's over a thousand dollars. I wouldn't mind earning half of that amount if I got the chance."

"Well, Joe, I think we're in a fair way to earn it, if my idea of the situation turns out to be the correct one. While my main purpose is to rescue Jessie Brown, our success in that direction will probably result in the overthrow of the smugglers. If we can corner them, and then land them in jail, with the help of the revenue men, we'll probably get a large slice of the reward."

The boys were now drawing near to the old churchyard and church, where the ancient tombstones looked hoary and mildewed, and stuck up out of the sod at all kinds of angles.

It was a creepy spot to pass at that hour of the night, and Joe, who had not the special interest in the pursuit that Dick had, began to feel a bit nervous over their proximity to that grawsome locality.

There was not the slightest sign of life anywhere around the church to indicate that smugglers, or any other collection of individuals, roosted even temporarily in the building.

It was as dark and silent as the vaults in the adjoining graveyard.

Dick led the way directly into the churchyard, and then hugged the low stone wall on the seaward side which led right up to the church.

This was a bit of strategy on Dick's part to avoid being seen by any lookout that might be scanning the beach for the approach of intruders.

He was conducting operations just as if he was certain that there were smugglers in the vaults of the old church.

If his calculations were wrong, then his chances of saving Jessie Brown that night, or perhaps any other time, for that matter, were exceedingly slim.

"We can't be too cautious in approaching the church, Joe, for if the rascals are here we wouldn't fare very well if they caught us trying to butt in on their secrets."

"I'll bet we'd be in a tight fix, for we could look for no help out here," said Joe. "It's so lonesome it gives me the shivers."

They paused close to the church and looked up and down the long stretch of surf-pounded beach.

At first they could make out nothing but the silent sand, then Dick saw two objects walking rapidly in their direction.

He was almost certain that they were Captain Harrup and Jessie Brown.

Even as he looked he saw a third object jump out from among the bushes and join the others.

"That's Maddocks," he said to himself. Then nudging Joe, he pointed at the advancing persons and said briefly: "Here they come. The girl has recovered her senses and is walking beside the cap'n."

Hiding behind the stone wall, under the shadow of the church, the boys silently watched the advancing figures.

Inside of five minutes Dick was able to identify them beyond a doubt.

"That's Cap'n Harrup in the middle," he told Joe.

"And that's Jessie Brown, is it?" said Joe, watching the oncoming girl with no little curiosity.

"Yes," replied Dick.

Captain Harrup, leading Jessie and accompanied by his burly mate, hurried forward, with an occasional glance over their shoulders, as if they feared pursuit.

Reaching the broken foundations of the church, where it overlapped the beach, they paused to assure themselves that no one was in sight.

Then the captain uttered a signal whistle.

In a moment or two a lantern flashed from the vaults.

Seeing which, Harrup, dragging the girl with him, entered the ruin, with Maddocks close at his heels.

The lantern vanished, and so did the smuggler captain, the girl and his mate.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FINGER OF SUSPICION POINTS AT ABNER PARKER AND HIS SON BIGE.

"Well, Joe," said Dick, "I guess there isn't much doubt now about this old church being the secret shore rendezvous of the violators of the Maine excise laws."

"That's right," nodded his companion. "We'd better notify the revenue officer right away, hadn't we?"

"Do you know where he is to be found?"

"Blessed if I do."

"Have you seen him or any of the government men lately?" Joe shook his head.

"It's my opinion that the revenue officer is no nearer this spot than Rockland. Or he may be at Rockport, or somewhere else."

"Then what are we goin' to do?" asked Joe, scratching his head.

"The only thing I see is for you to make your way to the village as fast as you can and gather a crowd of volunteers to come here, surround the church and capture all that are inside."

"What are you goin' to do?"

"Stay around and keep tab on the rascals."

"You can't prevent them from gettin' away if they've a mind to do so," said Joe.

"I suppose not," admitted Dick. "I hope they won't make a move to leave here for an hour or two yet, and that will give you time to do your part."

"All right. I'll get a hustle on," replied Joe. "Hello! Here come a couple more of the crowd, I guess."

Dick looked along the beach and saw a man and a boy approaching.

In a few minutes they came near enough for the boys to see their faces quite plainly.

"Why, it's Bige Parker and his old man," whispered Joe, in some astonishment.

Dick had recognized them, and was equally surprised.

"I wonder what they're doing down here at this hour of the night?" he remarked.

Mr. Abner Parker and his son walked straight up to the ruins and stopped.

Then Bige put his fingers to his mouth and gave utterance to a peculiar whistle three times in succession.

"Now, what do you think of that?" gasped Joe. "Bige and his old man must be in with the liquor smugglers, for a fact."

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Dick.

A man with a lantern presently issued from the ruins, walked up to Abner Parker and flashed the light in his and Bige's face.

"Well, my man," the boys heard Mr. Parker say, "I guess you find me all right, don't you? This is my boy Bige."

"Wait here till I report you to Cap'n Harrup, Mr. Parker," said the man.

He turned around and vanished the way he came.

In a few moments the light flashed in the ruins beyond, and a voice bade the newcomers advance.

They obeyed and disappeared under the ruins of the old church.

"I'll bet old man Parker is one of the chaps that is in this plot to rob the government and beat the excise," said Joe.

"I'd like to make sure of that," said Dick. "It would be money in our pockets, Joe."

"If he's captured in the company of the smugglers, he'll have to explain why he was down here. It will put him in a mighty bad light, any way you put it," said Joe.

"It will that; but he can't be held without some direct evidence. Run along now and get a dozen people to come down here. Bring them through the churchyard instead of by way of the beach. At any rate, you want to use as much caution as possible."

So Joe started off in the shadow of the wall, leaving Dick to watch the church.

"I'd like to get into the vaults, if I could do so without being detected," thought Dick, when he was alone. "I'm mighty anxious about that girl. I'm willing to take a long chance to rescue her from the clutches of Cap'n Harrup."

The more Dick considered the matter the more anxious he became to get a peep at the rascals who were congregated in the ruins of the old church.

"It's rather a risky matter to try and investigate the vaults, but it is worth taking a chance when the cause is good."

He knew that it would take Joe more than an hour, if not two, to reach the village, gather a sufficient force of resolute men, and return to that spot with them.

It was rather an irksome business crouching down behind the churchyard wall and trying to kill time.

So finally he determined to enter the church.

With much caution he made his way to the rear of the crumbling edifice.

By the aid of a pile of fallen stones he pulled himself up to a windowless opening and crawled inside the building.

The rising moon was just bathing the eastern wall with a flood of white light, and shafts of moonshine entered through the half dozen unprotected openings, once filled with stained glass, and illuminated the whole of the interior.

Nothing remained there but the four bare walls and the broken floor formed of big slabs of stones.

A solemn silence reigned in this abandoned house of God, disturbed only by the monotonous roar of the surf on the shore outside.

Dick picked his way softly across the floor, with his eyes and ears on the alert.

There might be a watcher somewhere about, whom he did not want to run foul of.

After making a careful observation of the place for ten minutes he failed to find any traces of a guard or lookout.

"There does not seem to be any way of reaching the vaults from up here," he said to himself at last. "I've heard, though, that there originally were stone steps leading to the vaults under a movable slab at one side of the pulpit. I wonder if I can locate that slab?"

He tiptoed over to where the pulpit had once stood and began to examine the stone flooring with great care.

The moonlight was now of great advantage to him, as it made the interior of the church almost as bright as daylight.

At length he made out a big slab to which were attached three pair of heavy hinges, and at the opposite side there were two big iron rings imbedded at each end of the slab.

"I've found it," he breathed, his blood quickening under the excitement of the moment. "But I don't believe I'll be able, single-handed, to move it. It has probably remained untouched ever since the church was allowed to go to ruin."

Dick, however, had no idea of giving up without making the best effort he knew how to overcome the difficulty.

So he laid hold of one of the rings and pulled.

The ponderous appearance of the slab gave him little hopes of success.

So delicately adjusted was the stone for moving, however, that, despite its size, it soon began to yield to Dick's tough muscles.

Little by little it rose from its socket, disclosing a dark void below.

When the stone reached a perpendicular position it stopped and would go no further.

Dick had some matches in his pocket.

He lit one and flashed the light down into the abyss.

He saw a dozen stone steps as solid as the rocks on the seashore, leading down into the vaults.

"I wonder if those liquor smugglers know of this way of access to the ruins below? I'll wager they don't. I may be able to get right amongst them without their knowledge. That will be great. It will serve as a fine way of trapping them when Joe brings back a dozen villagers to round the rascals up."

Dick descended the stone steps and came to the first of a series of low, vaults.

The crypts, where bodies had once been interred, were bare of the moldy coffins, for they had been removed and buried in the more modern cemetery.

Dick surveyed these vaults by the aid of matches, that burned with a dull, bluish light instead of the ordinary bright flare.

The boy had no interest in them except so far as they helped him forward in the object he was striving to attain.

Much to his chagrin, there seemed to be no outlet from them except the low arches that separated them.

When he reached the last one he was about to give up and return to the church above, when his sharp eyes detected a streak of light shining through a crevice in one of the walls.

Investigating this, he found it came from a large cellar beyond.

The room was filled with a score or two of mackerel kits.

A keg of real French brandy was concealed inside of each

kit, but so cleverly was this done that to all outward appearance they looked innocent enough, and not even a skilled revenue agent would have suspected the ruse.

A ship's lantern stood on top of one of the tiers, and an arched doorway communicated with another cellar to one side.

Close to the stacked-up mackerel kits, and evidently checking off their number, was Abner Parker, while beside him stood Captain Harrup.

The two men appeared to be on familiar terms, and confirmed Dick's opinion that Mr. Parker was the shore agent for the contraband liquor.

CHAPTER VIII.

DISCLOSES A FEW FACTS ABOUT THE LIQUOR SMUGGLING BUSINESS.

"You find the number of kits correct, according to the schedule, don't you, Mr. Parker?" said Captain Harrup, when his companion had finished his enumeration.

"Yes, captain, the count is all right," replied Abner Parker.

"And every one of them has a keg of the best French cognac snugly stowed away in its insides," said the skipper of the Firebrand, complacently, as he puffed his good cigar.

"Ah, Captain Harrup, this is a great scheme of yours for hoodwinking the revenue officers. So far it has worked like a charm. Two weeks ago an officer happened along as my son Bige was driving a load of these things to Rockport. He glanced into the wagon as he passed, but, seeing only half a dozen innocent-looking mackerel kits, he continued on his way without the least suspicion that he had been within arm's length of something he would have given a good deal to have spotted. It is a great idea."

"Yes," nodded the captain, blowing out a cloud of tobacco smoke; "it fills the bill right up to the handle. Now, how many empty kits will you have on hand for us to take off to the sloop to-night?"

"I have about forty."

"The boats will come ashore a little after midnight. Have the empties here before that hour. Then you can carry back a load of these full ones, and afterward get the balance up to your place before daylight."

"Bige will attend to that, all right, captain. He's a pretty slick boy, Bige is. He'll have every one of these kits in our barn before cock-crow."

"Good. You brought the money with you, I suppose, to pay for this lot?"

"Certainly. The sum we agreed on is—"

"Twenty-four hundred dollars," replied Captain Harrup, promptly.

"Why not make it an even two thousand dollars?" said Mr. Parker, persuasively.

"No, no, Mr. Parker," answered the skipper, with a strong shake of his head. "The lot is dirt cheap at twenty-four hundred dollars. I couldn't take a cent less."

"But I have only two thousand dollars."

"Hand it over. I'll trust you for the balance."

"I don't like to carry a credit account to you on my ledger," said Mr. Parker.

"Then send the four hundred dollars by your son Bige when he brings down the empty kits at midnight."

Seeing that Captain Harrup was firm in his demand, Mr. Parker counted out the two thousand dollars, and promised to send the balance by his son that night.

Captain Harrup stowed the bills away in an inner pocket and offered his companion a fat cigar.

"Come into the other cellar and we'll drink success to our next venture," he said, taking the lantern from its roosting spot on the top of the kits.

"I suppose you'll make another run this time thirty days hence?" said Mr. Parker, as he followed the skipper toward the arched opening.

"If nothing prevents, you may expect to hear from me about that time," replied Captain Harrup.

Then the two men retired to the adjoining cellar, leaving the one where the kits were in darkness, except for the streak of illumination that shone through the arched doorway.

"Well," said Dick, who had overheard every word of the foregoing conversation, "Mr. Parker and Bige are hand-in-glove with the liquor smugglers, beyond a doubt; but I guess I'll put a spoke in their wheel. So there's a keg of French cognac in every one of those mackerel kits? And Bige is to carry them up to his father's barn before sunrise? Maybe he will, but if he does, they'll never get any further, if I have anything to say about the matter. I'm going to get a

slice of that reward for putting the government on the track of the smugglers and the receiver of the contraband goods. It will kind of reconcile me to the loss of that treasure-box I had all the trouble of digging up for somebody else to benefit by. I wonder if I couldn't manage to get into that cellar some way? I'd like to get a further line on Captain Harrup and Mr. Parker."

Dick struck a match and examined the wall where the crack was.

He found it was in a crumbly state, and it looked as if it would not take much prying at to make a hole sufficiently large for him to crawl through.

He set to work without delay, and soon the stones came out in his hands, one by one, for the mortar had very little hold on them.

Dick worked diligently to accomplish his object.

He had some fear, however, that the wall might give way in a big chunk, with a noise loud enough to bring the smugglers into that cellar to find out the reason for the disturbance. Fortunately nothing like that happened.

As soon as he had made an opening wide enough for him to pass his shoulders through he stopped enlarging it any more.

After listening to the sounds that came to his ears from the adjacent cellar, and having satisfied himself that the persons in there were not likely to make their appearance through the archway for a while, at least, he scrambled through the hole he had made in the wall and soon found himself standing inside, within easy reach of the mackerel kits.

He made his way at once to the arched opening and looked into the next cellar.

It was twice the size of the one he was in, and was furnished with a plain deal table, at which Captain Harrup, William Maddocks and Mr. Parker sat drinking and smoking; half a dozen stools, a small iron stove, with a pipe leading out through the further wall, and various other articles which it is unnecessary to particularize.

Bige Parker sat on a stool close to his father's elbow, with a cigarette between his lips and a glass of something that looked stronger than water in his hand.

Near the archway was a piece of sailcloth thrown over some invisible object, and it immediately occurred to Dick that there was an excellent hiding-place for him if he could reach its shelter without being discovered.

This was not an easy feat to accomplish, as the cellar was brightly lighted up by two lanterns.

The men appeared to be absorbed in the conversation, while Bige's back was presented to him; so, after some reflection, Dick decided to chance it.

He got down on his hands and knees and crawled quickly toward it and presently hid himself under the sailcloth.

No one saw him do this, and he congratulated himself on the success of his maneuver.

He found that there was a heavy iron box, not very large, under the sailcloth.

As his fingers ran over its dirt-encrusted surface and rested on a handle at the end nearest him it suddenly flashed across his mind that this box was very like the one he had dug up near the old shanty on his half-acre plot.

A strong suspicion gradually formed itself in his mind that this might be the same chest.

Should such be the actual fact, it was certainly a mystery how it came to be in that cellar.

It could only be accounted for by the fact that some member of this crowd of smugglers had seen him dig the box up and afterward rebury it close to the shanty.

Then, taking advantage of his short absence from the spot when he went after Joe and his fishcart, had dug it up and dragged it away to some place, whence it was afterward conveyed to the old church.

As the reflection struck him that he had a chance of regaining this box of money, his blood began to tingle with a fresh excitement.

He had now a triple object in circumventing the liquor smugglers, namely, the rescue of Jessie Brown, the recovery of the lost treasure-box and the prospective reward that would surely be his if the rascals were captured through his efforts.

"I don't see a sign of Jessie Brown's presence down here," he said to himself. "I wonder where the cap'n stowed her away?"

He remained very still in his hiding-place, for fear one of the persons in the place might notice a movement of the sail-

cloth, which would naturally arouse his suspicion that something was wrong.

Of course he easily heard all that was being said at the table.

"I should think your movements would be closely watched at St. Johns," remarked Mr. Parker to Captain Harrup. "You see, the revenue people are satisfied that contraband liquor is being smuggled into this State at some point along the coast, and lately their suspicions have attached to this locality. I suppose the reason for that is because the Rockport, Rockland and Warren druggists have not been buying much liquor of late from Boston, for medicinal purposes, of course, and yet they seem to have an unusually plentiful supply of extra fine brandy constantly on hand, in spite of the fact that physicians have found it necessary to issue an increasing number of prescriptions calling for brandy. Then, too, every well-to-do resident, as well as about every farmer, has a private demijohn in some secret spot on his premises. As a matter of fact, the authorities have discovered that alcoholic liquors were never quite so plenteous within a radius of one hundred miles of this spot as they are now."

Captain Harrup and his mate laughed heartily at Mr. Parker's words.

"Yes," replied the captain, "the Firebrand is getting to be an object of suspicion at St. Johns. There is no doubt of that fact. The Newfoundland authorities don't care a tinker's blessing, as they are losing nothing, but the American government has several secret service men on the watch there. I have discovered the identity of two of them who have been nosing around the water-front. But what can they make out of the sloop but a simple fishing smack? We always sail in an open way on a mackerel cruise, and mackerel are to be found along this coast as well as elsewhere. When we return to St. Johns we're loaded down with the fish. No one who has watched the sloop has ever seen us take a single cask of brandy or a solitary case of wine on board. How could they, when we haven't done so? The brandy and other liquor is carried out of St. Johns, and sometimes other Canadian ports, by another vessel, that meets us off soundings, where the transfer is effected. Then I land the stuff at the Spindles, where we keep the empty kits. There the brandy kegs are packed in the kits, and when taken into Rockland are landed here. You know that it wouldn't do to bring too many kits of mackerel into Rockland under existing conditions, lest discovery of our methods might come about, and that would be the end of the business. That's why I selected the lonesome stretch of shore near this church to help us out."

"I understand," replied Mr. Parker. "You seem to be a pastmaster at dissimulation."

"One has got to be quick-witted when dealing with the argus-eyed officials on the lookout at all times."

"Well, I guess I've got to be moving," said Mr. Parker, finishing his glass and rising to his feet. "It will take an hour or more, after Bige and I get home, for him to bring those kits down here."

"One glass more before we part, Mr. Parker," said the captain, refilling the glasses from the stone jug on the table. "Here's success to a continuation of our trade, and may you have no trouble in getting the contents of those forty-odd kits in yonder cellar on the market."

This sentiment was duly drank to with much enthusiasm on the part of those vitally interested in the nefarious traffic, after which Abner Parker and his precious son took their departure from the place.

CHAPTER IX.

TREATS OF CAPTAIN HARRUP, HIS MATE, AND JESSIE BROWN.

Captain Harrup and his mate remained at the table.

"What are your ultimate intentions toward that girl cap'n?" asked Maddocks.

"Why, I mean to marry her, of course. I thought you knew that."

"I've heard you say so half a dozen times, but I don't see you doing it."

"I haven't been able to win her over to my way of thinking as yet; that's the reason the ceremony has been postponed."

"Will you ever win her over? She's even more opposed to you now than she was when she first came aboard the sloop."

"Oh, she'll get tired of holding off, and being kept under hatches, after a while."

"If you don't do something to the point with regard to her soon it will lead to trouble. She all but got away from you to-night."

"I know she did, but she won't get another chance to give us the slip soon again," said the captain vehemently.

"She might have ruined us if she had gone clean off and told tales," replied Maddocks. "She's a dangerous adjunct to our business, cap'n. Some means must be found to insure her silence. If you're sweet on her, and can't live without her, you'd better marry her right off the reel, whether she's willing or not. Then her own interests will no doubt keep her quiet."

"It isn't that I'm sweet on her, Maddocks. She's rather a young thing for a man of my years."

"Then what's your object in hanging on to her?"

"The fact of the matter is, she's heiress to a considerable property that I'd like to get my hands on."

"Oh, is that the way the wind blows? You think by marrying her that you'll come in for quite a bit of property, eh?"

Captain Harrup nodded.

"Then if I was you, cap'n, I wouldn't lose any unnecessary time in having the knot tied. The sooner the better, for your interests as well as ours."

"I know, but a forced marriage is not a legal one. Things must be done up ship-shape in order to arrive at results."

"How long have you known her?"

"I've known her, in a way, ever since she was a little girl and came under the roof of an old comrade of mine. Brown isn't her right name, but is the name he gave her when he got her. His wife was nurse to the girl's mother, and because she was detected and dismissed from a particularly soft berth for taking things that belonged to the grand house in which she was employed she revenged herself by kidnapping the child and carrying her off to Newfoundland, where she kept her until lately, when I persuaded the girl to come aboard my sloop under pretense of restoring her to her parents, whom she had always supposed to be dead until I told her they wasn't, and that they have never really ceased to look for her, which is the one straight fact of the cock-and-bull yarn I handed her out. She's been dead to them these twelve years, but they still have detectives searching at intervals for some trace of her."

"Her folks are wealthy, then, I s'pose?"

"Yes. Got plenty of worldly goods."

"All of which she'll come in for one of these days, if she's allowed to return to them, eh?"

Captain Harrup nodded.

"The most important point to me is that her grandfather left her about fifty thousand dollars when she was three years old, just before she was stolen. That is still being held in trust for her and is the golden object I'm after."

"Where does her folks live?"

"In Boston."

"And their name is—"

"Oh, come now, Maddocks, you don't expect I'm going to tell you the real secret, do you?" asked Captain Harrup, with a short laugh.

The mate laughed, too, and refilled his glass.

"Well, here's hoping that you'll get your flukes on the rhino," he said. "Now, let's talk about a more interesting subject to me."

"What's that?"

"Why, that brass-bound box I helped you to carry down from the spot where you had it buried to this cellar. Yonder it lies under that bit of sailcloth."

"What about it?"

"I want to know what's in it."

"You know as much about it as I do."

"Well, what do you think is in it?"

"I think it holds something valuable—silver plate, for instance."

"Or money."

"Money wouldn't weigh—"

"Gold money would."

"I don't think it's money that makes it weighty."

"What, then?"

"Silver plate and other like articles."

"What makes you suppose it contains such stuff as that?"

"Because I imagine it holds the plunder of some robbery done in this neighborhood, and silverware is the more likely goods that would be carried off. There may be some money in it, but I think it more likely that the thief would keep that in his pocket. Now, it is different as regards other kinds of swag which has to be turned into money—that's always a more or less dangerous matter, for it can be traced."

"What makes you think the contents of the box is stolen property? To my eye, that chest looks like a very old one that had been a good many years underground. Some old

miser around here may have buried his gold in it, and then died with the secret untold."

"You may be right, Maddocks," replied Captain Harrup, reflectively.

"Right or not, what I'm trying to get at is what is coming to me out of it."

"For helping me to fetch it here?"

"Exactly, and for assisting you to get it off aboard the sloop. It's right I should have a share, isn't it?"

"I expect to give you a portion, but certainly not a full half."

"I'm not looking for half. You found it, and have the first call upon it, but I think that about a quarter would be a fair divvy."

Captain Harrup looked as if he was not particularly anxious to hand over as much as that of his find, which he privately believed to consist of property of considerable value.

Finally he agreed to his mate's proposition, though he did it grudgingly.

Then he looked at his watch.

"It's half-past ten," he said. "Suppose you go out and talk to Notes for a while. I've got something to say to the girl."

"All right," agreed Maddocks, draining his glass and rising from his chair.

The mate recharged his pipe, lit it, and strolled out of the cellar.

After he had gone, Captain Harrup sat for a while smoking the last of his cigar, and apparently thinking deeply.

At length he tossed the butt away, got up, went through an opening in the cellar, and presently returned, leading Jessie Brown by the wrist.

"Sit down," he said to her, resuming his former seat at the table.

She obeyed.

There were traces of tears on her cheeks, and her manner was much depressed.

"I want to know when you are going to marry me, Jessie?" said Captain Harrup, leaning his arms on the table and looking at her.

The girl made no reply, nor did she raise her eyes from the floor at his question.

"Still obdurate, eh?" he said harshly. "This afternoon you made your escape from the island, and only that I fortunately happened to be near the shore when you landed you might have given me the slip. As it was, you did manage to escape for a while. What were you saying to that young cub you met on that farm?"

"Nothing that need worry you," she answered, with an effort.

"You mean you did not betray the business that brings us to this coast—is that it?"

"Yes."

"But you told him about yourself. You told him I had taken you away from your home in Canada, promising to restore you to parents you had thought dead. You told him that, didn't you?"

"I did."

"You also told him that as soon as I got you aboard the sloop I refused to carry out my promise until you married me. Isn't that true?"

"It is."

"Why did you confide all that to a stranger—a common farm boy?"

Jessie remained silent.

"Answer me!" he demanded sharply.

"Because—because—I—"

She broke down, bent her head on the edge of the table and began to weep bitterly.

"Because you were a little fool," he said angrily. "No doubt you'd have betrayed the whole business if I hadn't come upon you when I did."

"No, no!" she sobbed.

He stroked his heavy beard and regarded her for a moment or two in silence.

"What would have prevented you from giving us away?"

"I wouldn't want to send you or the others to prison," she replied in a choked voice.

"Very considerate of you, indeed," he answered sneeringly. "If you think so much of my safety, why won't you marry me and put an end to your captivity?"

"Because I never can care enough for you to do that."

"I'm too old for you, I suppose? Well, I'm not a young shrimp, it is true. I'm a man able to provide for you in a proper manner. I've no doubt I could make you happy enough if you'd look at the matter in a sensible way. I've got money—a good bit of it—and I mean to have more. If anything

happened to me after we got spliced it would all go to you. Then you'd be a fine, handsome young widow. There are lots of girls that would tumble over themselves to get me if they thought they had a chance. Forty-four years wouldn't stand in the way—not much. No, nor fifty-four, for that matter. However, I don't mean to be turned down. Do you hear me? I've made up my mind to marry you, and when I determine on a thing I always put it through by hook or by crook. The best thing you can do is to yield at once. Then when the business is done up brown I'll take you to your parents."

"Are my father and mother surely alive?"

"They are."

"Where, oh, where are they?"

"They're living in Boston."

"What is my real name?"

"You will find out after you have married me."

"You will not tell me now?"

"I'm not such a fool," he replied curtly.

"How can I know you are telling the truth? How can I tell but this is a trick on your part to make me marry you? I do not love you—I never can; but if I was sure that I would see and embrace a dear mother and father whose love I have so long been deprived of I'd—"

"Well?" said the captain, as she paused with a little shudder.

"I'd consent to marry you," she replied in an almost inaudible tone.

"If you were sure, eh?" he said in a tone of satisfaction. "I have here all the necessary evidence to prove who you are," he said, putting his hand in his pocket and bringing out a pocketbook. "When we return to Newfoundland we'll go to a minister's. Before he reads the ceremony that will make us one you shall look at these papers and satisfy yourself that I have not deceived you, but before I will place them in your hands you must swear to stand by your promise. Do you agree to that?"

Before she could answer him a loud sneeze came from under the piece of sailcloth that covered the brass-bound treasure box.

Captain Harrup turned and looked at the tumbled piece of canvas.

Then he rose and, walking to the spot, tore the sailcloth away.

Dick Dallas lay revealed before his astonished eyes.

CHAPTER X.

DICK FINDS HIMSELF IN A TIGHT FIX.

Jessie Brown had followed Captain Harrup's movements with her eyes, and when the sailcloth was cast aside, and our young hero was plainly to be seen crouching beside the dirt-encrusted chest, she instantly recognized him, though she had only seen him once before under a starlit sky.

Instinctively she clasped her hands and uttered a suppressed scream.

"So it's you, is it?" roared Captain Harrup, in angry amazement, recognizing the boy as the same who had stood up for Jessie Brown at the Richardson farm.

Dick jumped to his feet and faced the skipper of the Firebrand.

"How came you here?" demanded the captain.

"I came after my box," replied Dick adopting that excuse on the spur of the moment.

"After your what?"

"My box."

"What box, you young monkey?"

"That brass-bound chest here. It's mine. I dug it up and then you stole it from me."

Those words caused Captain Harrup to identify Dick as the boy he had seen dig up and afterward rebury the box.

A much more serious question than the ownership of the brass-bound treasure-chest confronted the captain.

How long had the lad been concealed under that piece of sailcloth, and what had he heard during that time?

"How did you get in here and when?" gritted the skipper.

"I want to know if you are going to give up that box?" asked Dick, ignoring the question.

"Answer my questions," thundered Captain Harrup.

"Oh, I walked in a little while ago," Dick answered carelessly.

Captain Harrup put a whistle to his lips and blew a blast.

Mr. Maddocks responded at once.

"What do you want, cap'n?" he asked.

Then his gaze lighted on Dick.

"Why, who's this?" he added.

"Don't you recognize him?" asked the captain.

The mate stepped closer and looked the boy in the face.

"I do now," answered Maddocks with a low imprecation. "This is the young cub you handed over to me to watch—the chap you found the girl with—and he gave me the slip with the help of another lad who came up shortly after you had gone off with the young lady. What's he doing here? How did he get in?"

"That's what I want to know. Take a lantern and examine the next cellar."

The mate grabbed a lantern, entered the adjoining cellar, and returned in a moment or two.

"There's a big hole in the north wall that wasn't there when the kits were stowed away. He must have got in that way."

"You watch him while I take a look at it," said the skipper.

He took the lantern from the mate's hand and entered the next cellar.

When he came back he was madder than ever.

"It's clear he broke through from the vaults beyond. There must be another hole somewhere beyond communicating from the outside. The cub has followed us, and he's evidently been here long enough to learn enough to ruin us. What shall we do with him?"

"The first thing will be to tie him up so he can't escape," said Maddocks.

"Get a piece of rope and do it, then?" replied Captain Harrup, drawing his revolver and pointing it at Dick. "Since you've seen fit to poke your nose into a hornets' nest, you young cub, you must expect to be stung."

The mate readily found a small length of rope and approached Dick to tie him.

The boy dodged so as to place the mate between him and the pointed pistol.

Maddocks endeavored to grab him, but failed.

"Stand still or I'll shoot you," roared Captain Harrup, altering his position so as to cover the boy again.

As he uttered the words Jessie Brown sprang between Dick and the captain's aim.

"Stand out of the way, Jessie!" stormed the skipper.

"You sha'n't shoot him!" she cried, desperately.

"Seize her, Maddocks!" cried Captain Harrup, furiously, advancing himself.

The mate made a spring at the girl and laid hold of her.

The skipper walked up to Dick and thrust the revolver within an inch or two of his nose.

"Now, then, Maddocks, let the girl go and tie this slippery interloper."

The mate obeyed and in two minutes Dick was a prisoner with his arms secured behind his back.

"Trice him up to yonder stanchion," directed Captain Harrup.

Dick was duly fastened to a post at the back of the cellar.

"Now, my girl," said the skipper, putting the lantern on the table, "you'd better go back to your cage till the boats arrive and I can send you off to the sloop."

He grabbed her by the wrist and marched her off by the route he had brought her into the cellar.

In a few moments he returned.

"Come here, Maddocks," he said. "We'll have to carry this young chap aboard of the sloop or else—"

"What?"

"Shoot him."

Maddocks shook his head to the last suggestion.

"No blood-letting in mine," he objected.

"There is no silence like the silence of death," persisted the skipper. "He has our secret in his possession, and if he escapes—"

"We mustn't let him escape."

"Of course not, but if we permit him to live there is always a chance of his outwitting us when we're off our guard. For my part I shouldn't like to lose what I've worked so hard for."

"Nor I," replied the mate, "but murder I draw a line at."

"Seems to me you've grown mighty squeamish all at once," sneered Captain Harrup, with a frown. "I don't call it murder—it's self-preservation."

"I don't see any need for going to extremes with the boy. We've got him in our power. We ought to be able to hold him as well as you've held that girl."

"And he might escape from us just as that girl came within an ace of doing. That boy butted in here of his own free will and ought to take the consequences."

"Of course he'll have to take the consequences, but those consequences need not mean his death."

"Well, we'll leave the matter for all hands to decide on. We're all in the same boat, though you and I have the most

to lose. This lad is a plucky fellow—I can see that with half an eye—and he's bound to give us a whole lot of trouble unless we can silence him effectively. As I said before, if he should make his escape it would then be good-bye to us and the business. Our trips would be confined to the pavement of the State prison, and the sloop and our paraphernalia would be sold to the highest bidder to pad out the reward that is offered for our detection and conviction. We should be as completely ruined as any man that ever went through a court of bankruptcy."

"I reckon I value my liberty as well as any of you, and would risk life and limb to preserve it," responded the mate doggedly. "I would defend my property to the last, and, in a fair fight, wouldn't hesitate to shed blood to save it, but I'd sooner lose all than put my neck into the hangman's noose."

"There's no danger of our doing that. If it's so decided that the boy is to be put out of the way we'll draw lots to see who will undertake the job, and that can be arranged in such a way that none of us will know who the lot falls to. Then the lad will disappear, and that's all there'll be to it."

"I don't like it," replied Maddocks. "It's my opinion if we deal fairly with the chap he will never betray us."

"Oh, of course," returned Captain Harrup, ironically. "I s'pose you'd vote to let him go free and trust to his honor. Bosh! The first thing he'd do would be to put the revenue officers on to us and our game. I wouldn't trust a man's oath, under the circumstances, much less a boy's."

William Maddocks shrugged his shoulders and filled out a glass of liquor for himself, an example followed by the skipper.

They drank in silence.

"It's pretty near time for the boats to come ashore," said Captain Harrup, putting down his glass. "Let's adjourn to the beach."

The two men left the cellar and Dick Dallas to his own reflections.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW DICK AND JESSIE MADE THEIR ESCAPE FROM THE SMUGGLERS.

"I guess I'm in a pretty tight box," mused Dick, after the skipper and his mate had left the cellar. "I wonder what they'll do with me? Thank goodness Joe wasn't in here, too. He ought to be back here soon with a crowd large enough to take these three rascals into custody, and release me and Miss Brown. If I could only manage to free myself before these chaps return, I could perhaps release the girl and then we both could make our escape by the way I entered."

With this idea in his head he strained away at the cords that bound him, but found that Maddocks had made a pretty thorough job of tying him to the post.

He couldn't possibly get his hands loose.

"It looks as if I'm a fixture until somebody cuts this rope," he said to himself disconsolately.

At that moment Jessie Brown looked cautiously into the cellar.

Seeing no one, she came forward and looked around.

Dick saw her at once and called out in a low tone:

"Miss Jessie."

She looked startled at the hail, and for a moment stood trembling in her tracks.

Then her eyes rested on Dick and she ran to him.

"Quick!" he exclaimed. "Cut me loose."

"I haven't a knife."

"Put your hand in my pocket and you'll find my jack-knife. It's got a sharp blade that'll go through the rope as though it was cheese."

Conscious that every moment was precious, Jessie lost no time in getting possession of the knife.

A minute later the cords fell away from the prisoner and he was free.

"Come, let's get out of here. You must go with me."

"Yes, yes; but how can we get out of these cellars? The only entrance is yonder, and that is guarded by one of Captain Harrup's men."

"There is another way."

"Another way?" she ejaculated in some surprise.

"Yes, the way I got in."

"Ah!"

"I broke through the wall of the next cellar. Come, I will show you."

He led the trembling girl into the adjacent cellar where the kits were stored.

It was dark, of course, but Dick knew the way to the opening he had made, and with his hand on Jessie's arm he brought her right up to it.

"I never can get through there," she said doubtfully.

"Yes, you can, when it's a case of must. I'll go through first and then pull you through afterward."

"Where does it lead to?" she asked.

"The burial vaults."

"Oh!"

"And thence up a stone stairway into the body of the church."

"How can we get out of the church?"

"By the same way I got in—through one of the windowless openings."

She seemed to be satisfied, and Dick, after listening a moment, crawled through the opening into the vault beyond.

As soon as he had landed on the other side he helped Jessie through also.

Then he hurried her through the dark and creepy vaults to the stone stairway.

"Now follow me up and we'll be out of the building in a twinkling."

He ran up the steps, and the girl followed close behind him.

"I may as well close this slab," he breathed, letting the heavy, but nicely adjusted slab down into its socket.

Like two shadows they crossed over to the window by which Dick had entered.

Here a real difficulty presented itself.

The ledge was just out of their reach.

Dick hadn't thought of the matter when he entered, for his thoughts were wholly engrossed with the one idea of getting into the church vaults.

Now it looked as if their escape was blocked.

However, it was not Dick's nature to be discouraged by obstacles.

Whenever he ran against a snag he put his mind to work to try and get around it by the easiest manner possible.

"How can we get out?" asked Jessie, anxiously.

"I can lift you up, then you can scramble through and drop on the other side."

"But how will you manage yourself?"

"Oh, I'll get out somehow," he replied reassuringly.

"Isn't there any other way?" she asked, not exactly liking the method proposed.

"I don't know," replied Dick. "We can investigate, of course, but time is precious with us. The skipper and his mate may return to the cellar any moment, and when they find I have escaped they're bound to follow, and then we may be caught on the very threshold of freedom."

"I'll do anything you say," she answered in a resigned tone.

"There's a couple of doors in the sacristy," he said; "but I'm afraid they're locked."

He led the way into a small, bleak apartment in the rear of the crumbling edifice.

Striking a match, he looked around and saw the two narrow doors at either end.

He tried one.

It was locked as he had feared.

The other was just as secure.

"Blocked again," he said. "The window seems to be our only chance."

They returned into the body of the church again.

Dick glanced around for something that would make their escape easier.

He saw a dark object at the far end of the church where it overlapped the beach.

Perhaps it was something that might assist them.

"Wait here," he said to Jessie.

Then he glided across the stone slabs composing the floor.

The dark object turned out to be a number of pieces of driftwood that somebody had carried from the shore into the church and left there.

One of them would serve their purpose.

By placing it beneath the window they could crawl up to the opening and thus reach the goal of their hopes.

Before taking possession of the log Dick went and tried the heavy front door of the church.

Pulling it open a little way he looked down on a mass of crumbling earth that the tides had undermined.

It would have been easy for him and Jessie to leave the church and gain the beach by this road, but it would lay them open to immediate recapture, as they must surely be seen at some point by the man on watch in the ruins.

Under such conditions Dick would not chance it.

So he closed the door, got the log and carried it over to where the girl was impatiently awaiting his return.

He stood the piece of driftwood at an angle under the opening, crawled up to the ledge, and then steadied it so that Jessie could follow.

Then to leap off onto the pile of debris on the outside was a simple matter.

The churchyard, with its straggling array of dilapidated headstones, lay before them, bathed in the moonshine.

Dick, however, did not propose to retreat very far from the church, for he wanted to be on hand when Joe came up with his force of villagers.

Indeed he expected them to appear at any moment now, for it was close on to midnight.

Dick looked around for some place where they might hide in comparative safety from the pursuit which he judged would not be long delayed.

Not far from the church, and close to the shore wall, was a dilapidated tomb.

It stood under the shade of a weeping willow.

Some weeks before Dick had peered into it when he was down that way, and he now recollects that it offered an excellent refuge.

It was erected over a vault, and was dry and roomy, at least for two persons.

To this shelter then Dick guided the trembling girl and assisted her to step into it.

By kneeling on the flagging which composed the floor of the tomb one could easily look over the edge of the broken cover of the tomb and survey not only the church, a hundred feet away, but a good part of the beach and ocean.

While Jessie remained hidden from sight Dick posted himself at the opening and awaited developments.

CHAPTER XII.

DICK AND JESSIE ARE RECAPTURED.

As Dick glanced out to sea he observed a good-sized sloop making in for the land from the direction of the Spindles.

Evidently this was the smugglers' craft—the Firebrand.

She hove to within a hundred yards of the beach, and two boats put out from her and headed for the shore.

Down the beach came a large farm wagon, driven by Bige Parker.

It was heaped high with empty mackerel kits.

Outside the ruins on the beach in the moonlight stood Captain Harrup and his mate.

They were watching the boats as they rapidly drew close in.

Bige and the wagon arrived at the same time that the boats were beached.

Captain Harrup stepped forward and issued orders to the four men composing the crew of each boat.

They turned to at once to unload the wagon and carry the kits to the boats.

When the kits were all aboard the men shoved the boats off and returned to the sloop, where their freight was speedily transferred to the hold of the vessel.

One boat alone returned to the beach.

In the meanwhile, however, Bige drove close to the ruins, and entered the place with Captain Harrup and the mate.

"There'll be something doing now sure," thought Dick, "for as soon as they enter the cellar they'll discover that I've escaped."

In about five minutes out dashed the skipper and Maddocks, each lantern in hand, and taking opposite directions they began to examine the foundation of the church on the outside.

"They've found out that I've got away, and perhaps have discovered that Jessie is missing, too, and are looking for the hole through which they suppose we made our escape," chuckled Dick, with his eyes on the bearded captain. "They must have been through the vaults in search of us, and are no doubt greatly puzzled to account for the manner by which we disappeared. If I had not closed the movable slab at the head of the stone steps the secret would have been clear; but unless they know how easily it works they would scarcely suspect we could have passed that way."

Captain Harrup and his mate came together at the rear of the church, and Dick saw them hold a consultation.

Then Maddocks climbed into the window through which the fugitives made their exit from the church.

He saw the log leaning against the sill of the opening and called the captain's attention to the suspicious fact.

Dick saw Captain Harrup make some motion and the mate disappeared with the lantern inside the church.

In about five minutes he reappeared at the window again and made his report, which, of course, was to the effect that the fugitives were not inside.

Another consultation was held and then they returned to the cellar again.

They did not reappear until the boat from the sloop reached the beach.

Then the captain rushed down to the water's edge and spoke to the four sailors.

Led by the skipper and Maddocks, they hurried into the graveyard and scattered among the tombs.

"They're making a regular search for us," muttered Dick. "I'll get in out of sight."

While the search was in progress the smuggler Noyes, the man who had been standing watch at the ruins, was assisting Bige Parker to load his wagon with the kits containing the concealed kegs of brandy.

When twenty had been put into the wagon the boy drove hastily off up the shore.

"Do you think they'll find us here?" asked Jessie in anxious tones after Dick had told her what Captain Harrup and his men were doing.

"I hope not," he replied. "I think the chances are all against it. Who would think of looking into an old broken-down tomb for us?"

Jessie felt reassured at his words.

It did look as if they were in a pretty secure retreat.

But they didn't know Captain Harrup's methods of doing things.

When the skipper was thoroughly aroused to the exigency of the moment his mind suggested a hundred ways of accomplishing a desired object.

On this occasion he realized that the escape of his prisoners meant absolute ruin to his profitable smuggling scheme.

Therefore he purposed to leave no stone unturned to recapture the fugitives.

Had he known that a crowd of villagers, led by the boy friend of Dick Dallas, was rapidly approaching the churchyard at that moment, he would have been more cautious, though hardly less thorough in his search.

He had directed that every tomb and headstone be carefully examined for some trace of his late prisoners.

Taking the direction of the shore wall himself he flashed his lantern on every side as he advanced.

Finally he reached the broken tomb in which the fugitives cowered down out of sight.

The moment he saw it it struck him that it offered unusual facilities of concealment.

He lowered his lantern into the break of the lid and bent his head down to examine its interior.

Of course he could not fail to see the boy and girl hugging the furthest corner.

"Ha!" he exclaimed with a grim look of satisfaction. "So there you are, eh?"

Rising, he blew his whistle to recall his men.

Maddocks and the others soon came running up.

"Have you located them?" asked the mate, eagerly.

"They're in this tomb," he laughed harshly. "Step out, both of you," he called to the fugitives, "or you'll be yanked out in short order."

The game was up, and so Dick and Jessie came forth most unwillingly, and were seized by their arms.

"Please let him go," she begged, with a tearful glance at Dick, "and I'll agree to anything you want."

"I dare say you will," he retorted coldly. "It's too late now to try and make conditions with me, young lady. You've had all the rope you're going to have. After this I'll take care it's your last."

"This is your second attempt to escape me, miss," said Captain Harrup, bestowing an angry look on the girl; "but it will be my will, not yours, that will rule matters. Bring them along."

So Dick and Jessie were marched back to the ruins.

They were not carried into the cellar, but after the boy's arms were bound they were forced into the boat.

Then Captain Harrup and the mate appeared with the brass-bound treasure-box between them, which they deposited in the bottom of the boat.

At this moment Joe and the villagers came dashing through the graveyard.

They were armed with shotguns, revolvers and other weapons hastily secured at their homes.

They were seen by the smugglers before they reached the

shore wall and a cry of alarm was raised.

Captain Harrup, recognizing the necessity of a hasty retreat, ordered his men into the boat.

The craft then put off from the shore, and, though followed by a volley from their pursuers, was soon safely out of range.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIREBRAND ARRIVES AT THE SPINDLES.

It was with feelings of great disappointment and chagrin that Dick watched the receding shore with its array of villagers, who had arrived on the scene just a moment too late to accomplish the purpose that brought them there.

He deeply regretted now that he had not retreated entirely from the churchyard with Jessie when the opportunity to do so was theirs.

Dick, however, never wasted time over spilled milk.

As the boat drew rapidly near to the sloop his brain was busy with ideas looking toward ultimate escape for himself and Jessie, and for the recovery of the brass-bound treasure-box.

The girl, who sat near the captain, looked downcast and spiritless.

To her the future looked very black indeed.

She knew that she had aroused the captain's anger, and consequently she feared that he would deal very sternly with her.

He was a man not easily turned from a purpose, and she feared him more than ever.

In a few moments the boat touched the sloop's side.

Captain Harrup first ordered the brass-bound box to be lifted aboard and carried into the small cabin astern, occupied by himself and Maddocks, and in which a bandbox of a state-room had been constructed for Jessie Brown.

Dick was next lifted out of the boat and, by the mate's orders, was carried down into the hold, where he was left among the empty mackerel kits to ruminant upon his hard luck.

Jessie was marched to her room and padlocked in.

She threw herself on her tiny bunk and relieved her pent-up feelings by a good cry.

The sloop's mainsail and jibs were set and she was headed offshore.

The wind was light and the sea smooth, the full moon reflecting a silver pathway across the sleeping waters.

Captain Harrup and his mate, who stood talking together near the wheel, recognized in the hostile attitude of the Maine folk, who had all but cut off their retreat, the fact that their rendezvous at the old church was now known, and it indicated that, for the present at least, their illicit traffic in contraband liquor had come to an end at that point on the New England coast.

Neither could surmise how this discovery had been brought about.

"It couldn't have been the revenue people," remarked Maddocks, "for we had positive information that one of the officers is at Rockland, another at Rockport, and the third is over at Vine Haven."

"Well, it's clear somebody got on to our movements, suspected our business and then brought a posse of local inhabitants down on us. The revenue officers will hear all about it in a few hours, and will make it their business to block our game at this point."

"It's a good thing for us that this discovery was not made some hours sooner. We should have lost those forty kegs of brandy. That would have been a serious matter."

"It certainly would. I have Mr. Parker's \$2,400 in my pocket," said Captain Harrup, slapping his leg grimly, "so it's up to him to look out for the safety of the stuff."

"He's got half of it in his barn by this time. The other half will probably be a total loss to him."

"That isn't our funeral," laughed the skipper. "The next question is whether our rendezvous at the Spindles is suspected. If it is, the revenue people will be nosing around there a few hours hence."

"Let them nose," chuckled Maddocks. "By the time they reach the Spindles, we'll have the kits snugly stowed away in the secret cavern, and they'll find us with our lines out, as innocent a fishing smack as any on the coast between here and the Canadian border."

"That's right," grinned the skipper complacently, "we have our St. Johns papers to show that our business is that of fishermen. We're safe enough, as long as we're not caught with the goods on, and there's no fear of that at present. At this moment we haven't a gallon of spirits on board except our private jugs in the cabin."

"You forgot two things, cap'n," said Maddocks, with a grave air.

"What are they?"

"Why, the girl in the cabin and that boy in the hold. They both know the real nature of our occupation. They could tell enough to ruin us beyond redemption."

"I understand that, Maddocks; but you don't suppose I'm fool enough to keep them aboard while there's a chance that we may expect a visit from our enemies? No, no; they shall be confined in our cavern at the first warning of danger. There I defy the revenue people, or any one else not in the secret, to find them."

"What do you intend to do with this boy ultimately? Not have him killed, I hope?"

"No; there is no necessity for that as long as there are other ways of silencing him for some time to come. I mean to carry him into St. Johns and there ship him aboard some foreign bound vessel. By the time he gets back to America I hope to be out of this business entirely. My share of the contents of that box in the cabin, and the results I expect to get out of my marriage with the girl, ought to place me on easy street for the rest of my life."

"I wish I could say as much for myself," said Maddocks, rather enviously.

An hour later the Firebrand was in the midst of the dangerous navigation of the Spindles, her nose pointed in for the island.

Captain Harrup stood at the wheel while Maddocks was forward taking notes of the different landmarks on the island by which he assisted the skipper to work the sloop in through the tortuous and intricate channel.

These two men seemed to be about the only ones to whom this perilous course was an open book.

They could take the Firebrand into the basin in most any kind of weather that was clear enough for them to see the island after they had passed through the outer line of reefs.

The hidden ledges and sunken rocks that abounded on every hand possessed no terrors for them.

No one else could make the island except in a rowboat in calm weather.

It took a full half hour for the sloop to run in that night, as the wind had fined down to a very light and variable breeze.

At length the vessel passed between the two tall white rocks called the Spindles, and came to anchor in the center of the basin.

Captain Harrup then posted one of his men on the highest point of the bluffs to give early warning of the approach of any suspicious-looking craft, especially the revenue cutter known to be at Portland the day before.

The rest of the crew were set to work getting the empty mackerel kits out of the hold and ashore, where they were quickly spirited out of sight.

When the job was finished Maddocks examined the ropes that held Dick to a stanchion in the after part of the fishy-smelling hold, and being satisfied that he couldn't release himself he ordered that the hatch cover be left partly off the opening to admit plenty of air to the prisoner, who was left in the darkness to his own unpleasant reflections.

"This is fierce," mused Dick. "I wonder how I'm going to extricate myself this time? I'm afraid I shall be watched pretty closely and won't get half a chance to do anything. I feel more sorry for Jessie than I do for myself. I'd give a whole lot to be able to help her out of her trouble, even if I didn't get off myself. She's the nicest girl I ever met, and I think as much of her as if she was my sister. It's a shame to think that she is in the power of such a man as Captain Harrup. It would give me a heap of satisfaction to put a spoke in his intentions toward her. He's a rascal, and his proper residence is the State prison."

Dick continued to think about Jessie's hard lot, and to tax his brain for some means of helping her, for some time, then the silence of the hold, and the weariness that crept over his senses, overcame him, and he dropped asleep.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHOWS HOW JOE KING TOOK A TRIP TO THE SPINDLES ON HIS OWN ACCOUNT.

Joe King was an intensely disappointed boy when he saw that the smugglers had managed to escape by the skin of their teeth.

He was greatly dismayed by the fact that he had seen Dick

Dallas in the receding boat with the girl Jessie, and that plainly showed that his friend had been captured by the rascals.

What to do he really didn't know.

In company with the chagrined villagers he watched the boat row alongside of the sloop, saw some kind of a chest, which he never dreamed to be the missing brass-bound treasure box, lifted aboard, and then the smugglers and their prisoners follow.

The sloop at once spread her canvas to the light breeze and sailed away.

A consultation was then held by the crowd of villagers, the result of which was that the ruins of the church was investigated, and the twenty mackerel kits were discovered in the inner cellar.

They looked innocent enough, for neither Joe nor the others had any suspicion that a keg of brandy was hidden in each.

It was decided to notify the revenue officer at Rockland in the morning that the liquor smugglers used the old church by the seashore as a rendezvous, and probably landed contraband spirits there to be afterward taken away by shore folk interested in the traffic.

Joe did not mention his suspicions concerning Abner Parker and his son to the villagers.

That information he intended to give to the officer later on with a view to the reward that was in it for him and Dick.

It was not considered necessary to do anything about the kits, which from their weight were judged to be filled with fish.

Besides they had no means for effecting their removal to the village.

It was reasoned that they would be safe enough where they were until the revenue officer came to take possession of them in the morning, as the smugglers were not likely to return in a hurry.

Some one proposed to have one of their number selected by lot to stand watch at the church for the rest of the night.

The majority objected to this suggestion as unnecessary.

Joe settled the question by voluntarily agreeing to stay there himself.

The rest of the party being quite willing that he should, if he wanted to, the posse soon afterward started back for the village, leaving the boy alone.

As soon as they were off Joe mounted the debris in front of the church door, and seating himself there, cast his eyes toward the offing where the white sails of the Firebrand could still be seen as she headed for the Spindles.

"I'll bet she's makin' for that island," he said to himself. "I've a great mind to run over to the house, take our skiff, and follow her to see if she really is goin' there. If those chaps are able to wrastle with the navigation of the Spindles it's a sure sign that's their regular haunt, for I don't know of any one who ever was able to run in there in anythin' larger than a small catboat, and the weather had to be mighty calm to make the island at that. I could do it in the skiff in this breeze all right, and I've a great mind to try, provided, of course, that the sloop stops there. If she keeps on to the eastward then I'll know she's bound for some port in Canada in all probability."

It was largely Joe's anxiety about the fate of his friend Dick that induced him to consider the foregoing plan so seriously.

The friendship of the two boys for each other was of the loyal order.

Either was always ready to do anything in the world in the interest of his friend, no matter what trouble or risk it entailed upon himself.

The fact that there wasn't any fun in watching the old ruins also had something to do with his resolution to sail over to the Spindles on the chance of being able to help Dick out of his trouble.

Having at length decided to do so he started off for his home at a rapid pace.

He had hardly got out of sight before Bige Parker came driving down the beach in the farm wagon for the second time that night.

When he reached the church he took a lantern from the wagon, lighted it and entered the ruins.

In a few minutes he returned with a loaded mackerel kit in his arms, which he shoved into the wagon.

He made twenty trips from the wagon to the cellar and back again, at the end of which he had loaded all the remaining kits on his wagon.

Then he jumped into the front seat, whipped up his team and drove off.

In due time Joe reached his father's cottage, which was dark and silent at that early hour in the morning.

The rudder, mast and sail of the skiff were kept in the shed, the key of which hung in a certain spot in the kitchen.

Joe had no difficulty in getting them.

He stepped the mast, shipped the rudder, and spread the sail to the breeze, light as it was, and started from the little landing-place for the Spindles.

The skiff was a swift sailer in such a breeze, skimming the water like a sea-bird.

In half an hour Joe had sighted the Firebrand again, headed direct for the island that lay a mile distant from her.

The skiff, which was such a small object on the ocean that no one aboard of the smuggling sloop observed her approach, rapidly overhauled the object of pursuit.

The boy soon saw that the Firebrand was being guided through the reefs that formed a cordon around the island.

That settled the question of her destination in his mind.

He then hauled to the wind and pointed the skiff for the opposite end of the Spindles.

Not long after the sloop had anchored in the basin, Joe beached his tiny craft in a shallow cove under the line of tall bluffs.

Then, with all due caution, he started to walk along the narrow line of beach at the foot of the bluffs toward the spindle-shaped rocks that stood like a couple of stiff-backed sentries on guard at the entrance of the narrow strait leading to the little harbor inside.

At length Joe reached and passed the spindle rocks and began to approach the basin where he expected to find the sloop.

The moon being now low in the western sky, the bluffs on that side of the channel threw a broad shadow that covered the boy's advance from chance observation.

When he came to the turn that gave him a full view of the basin he found the smugglers taking the last load of empty kits ashore.

Crouching down in the shadow of a good-sized rock the boy watched what was going on with some interest.

He saw the bearded skipper walking up and down the sloop's deck, smoking a cigar, and occasionally watching his men haul the kits out of the boat, along the beach and into some crevice or opening in the rocks beyond.

Captain Harrup was soon joined by his mate, and the two men paced the deck together until the sailors returned to the sloop and one by one disappeared into the forecastle to turn in for much needed rest.

At last the captain and mate went below and the deck was deserted.

Joe sat there and wondered what he should do next.

Dick was no doubt confined somewhere aboard the vessel, and the sturdy young fisherman judged that her hold was the most probable place where he was secured.

"I wonder if after a while, when all hands may be counted on as bein' fast asleep, I could manage to get aboard that craft unobserved and find out where Dick is tied up? There's a small boat beached a few yards away; I could reach the sloop in that. I am goin' to chance it just as soon as the moon is gone entirely down. Then the basin will be in deep shadow. There is no watch bein' kept up aboard, as the smugglers feel sure they are not at all likely to be molested in this reefbound island. If I am cautious I think matters are enough in my favor to enable me to find Dick and set him free. Then we can both sail back to the shore and put the revenue officer wise to the hidin'-place of the smuggler."

So Joe, having determined upon his line of action, sat and waited in the still land-locked little basin, for the propitious moment to arrive.

CHAPTER XV.

DICK PROPOSES AN AUDACIOUS PROJECT.

In the meanwhile Dick Dallas, triced up to the stanchion in the hold almost like a dead pig to a post, was sleeping the uneasy sleep of one whose position was an uncomfortable one.

Suddenly he was aroused to consciousness by the flash of a light before his eyes.

He blinked stupidly for a moment, like one whose senses are a bit confused, and then to his utter astonishment recognized the face and figure of his friend Joe King in the last

expiring flash of the match the young fisherman held in his fingers.

"Joe!" he exclaimed joyfully. "Is it really you?"

"Hush, not so loud!" came his friend's voice out of the darkness.

"Why, how did you get here?" asked Dick, eagerly.

"I'll tell you as soon as I cut you loose from this post. Your freedom is the first thing to consider," replied Joe, in a whisper, as he whipped out his jack-knife and, feeling for the rope, started in to saw it apart.

"This is the greatest surprise, and the most welcome one, of my life," said Dick, as he felt the strands dropping away from his arms.

"There you are, free at last," said Joe, in a tone of satisfaction.

"Give me your hand, old chap. You're a brick," said Dick. The boys clasped hands in the gloom of the hold.

"Now," continued Dick, "tell me how you come to be here at the Spindles, for that is where I suppose the sloop is anchored."

"Yes, this is the Spindles all right," replied Joe.

Then he rapidly sketched his movements from the moment the smugglers eluded the crowd of villagers at the beach until he let himself into the hold of the vessel on his hunt for his chum.

"Well, you're a peach, Joe," said Dick, enthusiastically. "I hardly thought you had so much enterprise in you."

"I guess you'd do as much for me, wouldn't you?"

"Bet your life I would."

"Then what is there wonderful about it?"

"Well, it was a mighty plucky thing for you to do, Joe; and I'm ever so much obliged to you for taking the risk in my behalf."

"Forget it, Dick, and let's get back to the main shore as soon as we can."

"I can't go without making an effort to rescue Jessie Brown," replied Dick.

"I'm afraid you're thinkin' of bitin' off more than you can chew. Where is she at this moment? In the cabin, probably. So is the skipper and his mate, too. How do you expect to get her out of the cabin without arousin' them? If they catch on to the fact that you're free and I'm with you, our cake will be all dough."

"That's right, too, but I hate to leave the girl behind. I should feel ashamed of myself, Joe."

"No use tryin' to attempt the impossible, Dick. We can bring the revenue men out here in a few hours and nab the whole bunch before they can get away. That's the safest and most sensible coarse to take."

Dick admitted that his companion's advice was good.

It did look like a forlorn chance to attempt the rescue of Jessie Brown under the circumstances.

"There's another thing I'd like to get around," said Dick. "What's that?"

"That brass-bound treasure box."

"Why, what are you talkin' about?" asked Joe, who had forgotten about the chest that his chum had dug up the previous afternoon.

"I'm talking about the box I dug up in my half-acre plot yesterday."

"What! The one that was missin' when we brought the cart up to the shanty?" asked Joe, in some surprise.

"That's the one."

"What about it?"

"It's aboard this sloop."

"It's what?" almost gasped Joe.

"Aboard this sloop," repeated Dick.

"Go on, you're joking."

"No, I'm not. Cap'n Harrup got possession of it in some mysterious way, for I saw it in the cellar under the church while I was there."

"You did. It's funny how he could have got hold of it. So you were in the cellar under the church? Did they catch you outside and fetch you in there?"

"No. I got in myself after you left me. I entered the wings. Then I discovered a movable slab in the floor, near where the pulpit used to be, that let me down into the vaults, when I made my way into the cellar where the mackerel kits were stowed by making a hole in the wall."

Dick then related to Joe how he hid under the sailcloth which covered the brass-bound treasure box and listened to the conversation between Captain Harrup, his mate and Mr. Parker; and how during a subsequent interview between the

skipper and Jessie he had accidentally sneezed and thus called attention to his presence in the place.

He told Joe how he had been tied up to a post in the cellar; how Jessie had released him; how they had made their escape from the church, and how they had been recaptured just before help appeared on the scene.

"Gee! You had quite a strenuous time of it, didn't you?" said Joe, when he concluded his story. "Now if you don't want to have any more of the same kind you'd better take my advice and leave this craft as quietly as you can with me. Never mind the brass-bound box or the girl either for the present. We'll recover the first and rescue the other later on under more favorable circumstances."

Dick with some reluctance fell in with his companion's views.

Joe led the way on deck up a short ladder that was nailed to the under framework of the hatch.

As they stood for a minute on the deck in a listening attitude there was not a sound to be heard fore or aft.

Then it was that a daring idea rushed into Dick's mind. Its very audacity appealed to his courageous nature, while it almost took his breath away as the thought formed itself in his mind.

"Joe," he whispered, in a tense tone, "how much nerve have you got?"

"What do you mean?" Joe whispered back.

"Have you got backbone enough to help me capture this sloop?"

"Capture the sloop!" gasped Joe. "Are you crazy?"

"I hope not. Listen. The crew are all asleep in the forecastle evidently, and I'll wager they're a tired lot. You and I could easily pull the slide over the opening and secure it so that we'd have them all caught like rats in a trap."

"My gracious! You don't think of attempting that, do you?"

"Why not? Just think what a feather it would be in our hats if we captured this vessel, just you and I."

"I wish we could," replied Joe, beginning to warm up to the somewhat doubtful proposition. "We might be able to secure the crew, as you say. That looks easy; but how about the skipper and the mate? They're a whole lot, and don't you forget it. You know the cap'n has a revolver, for you told me that he covered you with it in the cellar. The mate probably has a gun, too. It's too large a contract for us to undertake, old man."

"I'm not sure that it is, Joe. The cap'n and mate are both asleep. What's to stop me from going softly into the cabin and getting possession of their revolvers if I can find them in their clothes?"

"I'm thinkin' those kind of chaps sleep with one eye open. The least thing is apt to wake them."

"I'm ready to chance it," urged Dick, who, now that he was free again, was feeling as bold as a young lion. "Are you with me in this?"

"I am if you're determined to do it," answered Joe, sturdily.

"All right. The first thing we'll do is to secure the crew in the forecastle."

The two boys at once started to put their hazardous scheme into execution.

CHAPTER XVI.

SHOWS HOW DICK AND JOE TOOK POSSESSION OF THE SLOOP.

There was an iron ring, to which a stout rope was attached, on the slide which fitted the opening into the forecastle, and there was another ring imbedded in the deck to which the end of the aforesaid rope could be secured when it was necessary to keep the slide shut in dirty weather.

The boys cautiously pulled the slide shut and tied the rope to the deck ring.

"That settles the men," said Dick, triumphantly.

Apparently it did.

The riskiest part of the enterprise was still before them.

They glided toward the opening which led down into the little cabin.

"You can't be too cautious," said Joe as his companion started to go down.

Dick vanished into the cabin and Joe awaited the issue with the deepest anxiety.

Any moment he expected to hear the sounds of a scuffle, and he grasped a heavy billet of wood he held in his hands all the tighter, ready at the first alarm to rush down to Dick's assistance.

His chum remained below what seemed to be an almost endless interval.

At last he reappeared and he held two revolvers in his hands.

"I've drawn their stings," he said, in great glee, as he handed one of the weapons to Joe. "I think we're masters of the situation now," he added.

"To a large extent, yes," admitted his chum. "I'd be surer of it if we had them bound hand and foot. I'm afraid we'll have to do some shootin' before we can entirely subdue the skipper and the mate. They both look like hard nuts to crack."

"They are for fair; but we're the boys that will crack them all right."

"I hope so," replied Joe.

"We'll have them fast enough by closing the cabin slide, see?" said Dick, suiting the action to the word by drawing the small hatch over the entrance to the cabin, and securing it in much the same way they had treated the forecastle slide. "There, how are they going to get out?"

Joe chuckled with satisfaction.

"We have captured the sloop for a fact," he said. "If we only could slip her anchor, raise her mainsail and sail out of here, the game would soon be brought to a conclusion."

To do that was clearly out of the question, so the boys did not try to put such a thing into execution.

"What next?" asked Joe. "Do you think it would do for me to sail over to the main shore, send word of the state of affairs to the revenue officer at Rockland, and then get the old man and somebody else to come back with me in the skiff to make sure of these chaps?"

"I guess you'll have to," replied Dick, after a moment's thought.

"Do you think that with both revolvers you can prevent these rascals from breaking out after they wake up and find they're cooped up?"

"I think I can."

"I'm thinkin' you're goin' to have a strenuous time of it, old man," answered Joe, handing him the revolver. "I'll get back as soon as I can, you can depend on that. I wouldn't leave you only I don't see any other course to take."

"Neither do I," replied Dick.

So Joe took the boat in which he had rowed from the beach to the sloop and rowed out through the channel, and around close to the bluffs till he came to where his skiff lay tied to a rock in the little cove.

Boarding her, he spread the sail, and started for the distant coast of Maine.

And while he went on his way, Dick sat on the combing of the hatch and wondered when the fun would begin.

There was one fact the boys were ignorant of which was that one member of the crew was at liberty and not under hatches.

He was doing a four-hour spell of lookout duty on the highest point of the bluffs.

He expected to be relieved at sunrise, or about five o'clock. However, there was little danger of him interfering with Dick, for Joe had taken the only boat by which he could reach the sloop from the beach of the basin.

An hour passed slowly away.

Dick imagined that two hours must have elapsed, for the hour before dawn is commonly considered the darkest and gloomiest of the twenty-four.

Then the sky in the east began to lighten up, and soon there was abundant evidence that a new day was breaking.

It was about this time that Dick heard a noise in the cabin.

"There'll soon be something doing," he breathed, putting himself in shape for immediate action.

There was a floundering and heavy step on the brass-bound stairs of the cabin entrance, and then he heard some one fumbling around the inside of the slide, and he fancied he heard several smothered imprecations.

This lasted by a few seconds and was succeeded by a pounding on the slide.

Presently a heavy kick was administered to it.

The slide creaked and shivered under the blow, but it didn't budge for a cent.

Another blow and then another followed in rapid succession, and the person who was producing the tattoo was clearly mad by this time, and was swearing to beat the band.

Dick guessed from the sound of the voice that it was Captain Harrup who was making the demonstration.

The skipper was soon joined by the mate, who had been aroused by the tumult.

At this moment there came a banging on the forecastle hatch cover.

"Matters are beginning to get lively," thought Dick, holding a cocked revolver ready in each hand. "I'm afraid somebody is going to get hurt pretty soon if either of those hatch covers give way."

Some tremendous thumps were now heard on the cabin slide, and the boy expected to see it fly into pieces at any moment.

It didn't, however.

The banging on the forecastle hatch grew louder and more insistent.

Dick was standing in a position that covered both points of danger, and he was thrilling with the excitement of the moment.

The sun now burst above the horizon.

Dick could not see it as the sloop was hemmed in by the bluffs that surrounded the little basin, but its light was apparent in the eastern sky.

Suddenly there was a crash.

Captain Harrup had got hold of some implement in the cabin and had demolished half of the cabin slide.

Then Dick got busy, for the skipper and his mate were certain to be on deck in a minute unless he called a halt.

Springing forward, the boy presented the revolver in the astonished captain's face.

"If you make another effort to get out I'll shoot," he said in a resolute tone.

Then Maddock's face appeared at the broken slide and the revolver looked him in the eye in a way he didn't like.

"What's the meaning of this?" roared Captain Harrup.

"The meaning is that I've taken possession of this sloop, and you are both my prisoners."

At that moment Dick was startled to hear a hail from the shore.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

Dick glanced over at the beach and saw a man, evidently a member of the Firebrand's crew, shouting and gesticulating.

This was a surprise to the boy, but he paid no attention to the fellow.

He had all he could do to handle Captain Harrup and his mate.

The skipper and Maddocks held a consultation.

Evidently they did not believe that Dick was the sole master of the situation.

How could he be when Maddocks had left him so securely tied in the hold?

Clearly the sloop must have been visited by others, in spite of the lookout on the bluff, the boy released, and the sloop taken possession of.

But where were these others?

Captain Harrup and his mate could see only Dick and his threatening revolvers.

The sight wasn't pleasant even to their hardened nerves.

Lead travels quick and is not easy to dodge, and Dick certainly looked as if he would shoot on very slight provocation.

How long the boy could have held the situation in hand it is impossible to say, but fortunately abundant help was at hand.

Joe, when near the shore, had met the U. S. revenue cutter Frolic, bound east.

He had hailed her, was permitted to board after giving the officer of the deck some idea of the state of affairs, and was taken before the lieutenant in command.

The result of the interview was that the cutter was headed for the Spindles.

She hove to near the outer line of reefs, and two boats with their crews were piped away for duty against the smugglers.

With Joe in the leading boat they made for the spindle rocks, and shot into the basin at the moment when the smugglers in the forecastle succeeded in forcing the hatch and were springing out on deck.

The game, however, was now up for them.

They were all taken prisoners, and Captain Harrup and his mate received little more consideration than the others.

Dick's first act after the skipper and Maddocks were removed from the cabin was to release Jessie Brown from her stateroom and inform her that her captivity was at an end.

He then walked up to Captain Harrup, and thrusting his hand into the skipper's inner pocket, pulled out the long, red pocketbook which the captain had told Jessie in the cellar, in Dick's hearing, contained the evidences of the truth of his story about her parents.

He put it in his own pocket for the present.

The sloop was searched, but was found to contain nothing contraband.

The brass-bound treasure-box was claimed by Dick as his own property, and it was placed in one of the boats to be adjudicated upon by the commander of the cutter.

Dick, Joe and Jessie, as well as Captain Harrup and his mate, went in the same boat.

The crew of the Firebrand, which was abandoned in the basin, were carried off to the cutter in the other.

The cutter Frolic then headed for Rockland.

During the trip Dick established his claim to the ownership of the brass-bound box, and he was permitted to carry it away when the cutter anchored in Rockland.

The evidence given by Dick and Jessie to the lieutenant in command of the government vessel was sufficient to warrant the detention for trial of the captain and crew of the Firebrand, as well as to insure the immediate arrest of Abner Parker and his son Bige, who were soon lodged in the county jail.

The forty mackerel kits were found in the Parker barn, and forty kegs of fine French brandy were found inside of them.

As Jessie had no home to go to, Dick guaranteed her appearance as a witness when wanted, and took her with him to the Richardson farm, where she was most kindly received by Mrs. Richardson and her husband as soon as Dick had explained her circumstances.

Next morning Dick broke open the brass-bound box in Joe's presence, and found, as they both fully expected, that it was filled with gold coins of five, ten and twenty-dollar denominations.

It totaled up twenty-five thousand dollars, and of this Dick handed Joe one thousand dollars, which more than satisfied the young fisherman, who also looked forward to receiving five hundred dollars of the fifteen hundred dollars reward for the conviction of the liquor smugglers.

Captain Harrup, his men, Abner Parker and his son Bige were duly tried and convicted of breaking the revenue law of the United States, as well as the excise law of the State of Maine.

On these two counts they received heavy sentences, and as soon as they were sent to prison Dick and Joe received the rewards they had fairly won.

All that now remained for Dick to do was to take Jessie Brown to the home of her parents in Boston.

The documents, consisting chiefly of newspaper clippings cut from papers printed at the time of Jessie's kidnaping, showed that the girl was the daughter of the Hon. George Butterworth, member of Congress at that time from the — District of the State of Massachusetts, and that her home was at No. — Commonwealth avenue, in the city of Boston.

The Butterworths had about lost all hope of ever seeing their only child again, and their joy, consequently, may be imagined when Dick brought Jessie Brown to their home and stated the circumstances in which the clippings had come into his possession.

Thus Jessie, through the efforts of Dick Dallas, was restored to her parents, and the one great sorrow of her own life, as well as that of her father and mother, was wiped away forever.

As the ex-Congressman insisted on doing something handsome for Dick, our hero compromised the matter by taking a position to work his way up in the bank of which Mr. Butterworth was president.

Dick became, in time, a constant visitor at the Butterworth home, and when Jessie graduated from a fashionable college, at twenty, she and Dick became engaged.

Their wedding day came six months later in the Commonwealth avenue mansion, and on the same day, down in the village of Quibasset, Maine, another wedding was also celebrated which made Joe King and Polly Pritchard one for life.

When Dick returned from his wedding trip it was to fill a higher and more responsible position in the Butterworth bank.

He is a man now, well along in his prime, prosperous and wealthy, but his wife Jessie says that her proudest recollections of him cluster around the time when he saved her from Captain Harrup, and was Every Inch a Boy.

Next week's issue will contain "ON TO SUCCESS; OR, THE BOY WHO GOT AHEAD."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

Mr. J. E. Walters, of Elizabethtown, Ky., killed a gray eagle on his farm, four miles east of town, the other evening. The eagle had just previously killed a goose belonging to Mr. Walters, who took part in the affray with a shotgun. The bird measured seven feet from tip to tip of its wings.

A Mexican, hunting six miles east of Pratt, Kan., ran a rabbit into a hole. He pulled the bunny out, but the rabbit held to a sleeve of a man's jacket. Further examination by the Mexican showed that a large swag of heavy silverware had been hidden in the hole, wrapped up in the jacket. The police are trying to decide whether the silver was hidden treasure or the proceeds of a robbery. They suspect the latter.

The ashes of a Japanese have been sent by parcel post from Palm Beach, Fla., to New York, to be forwarded to Ehime, Japan. A. Ninomiya was a resident of Yamato, the Japanese colony near here. The body was cremated with the usual rites of his race, and the Florida Japanese Association undertook to send the ashes to Japan. There were two packages—one of five pounds weight and another of two; the postage was sixty cents on one and twenty-four cents on the other.

Germany appears to be trying a new method of attack on British merchantmen—with aeroplanes. The Cork steamship Avocet, which has arrived at Manchester, tells of a thirty-five-minute engagement with three hostile aeroplanes October 30. One of the aeroplanes was a large battle plane, which dropped thirty-six bombs, some of which missed the steamer by not more than seven feet. When the bombs were exhausted the battle plane fired on the Avocet with a machine gun. The ship's sides and decks were struck by bullets, but all the crew escaped injury.

According to a recent ordinance of the Bundesrat, the Imperial German Chancellor is empowered to authorize the coining of 5-pfennig pieces out of iron to the value of 5,000,000 marks. These coins are to have a milled edge and will contain the words "Deutsches Reich" over the figure "5" and the word "pfennig" under it, followed by the date. The obverse will have the usual stamp of the imperial coat-of-arms. The new coins are to replace those now made of nickel and copper, and they shall be withdrawn from circulation not later than two years after the conclusion of the present war.

There is a footprint system, instead of a finger-print system, in use at the Chicago Lying-In Hospital. Anybody who knows anything about babies knows that they look much alike when they first come into the world. To prevent possibility of exchange or mix-up, these things are done by the nurses and doctors there: Each baby, from the moment of birth, wears a small tape tied to its wrist

and bearing the same number the mother is given. The name of the baby is written in full on a piece of adhesive plaster on its little back. And, finally, the footprint of each baby is taken and properly labeled and recorded, because footprints are like finger-prints—no two are alike.

John Finlayson, 103 years old, discoverer of Finlayson River and Finlayson Lake in Yukon territory, has applied to the board of trustees of the Pioneers' Home at Sitka, Alaska, for a pension under the Alaska Territorial law providing for aged pioneers. Finlayson prospected and mined gold in California and Oregon until he was 66 years old. He retired with what he supposed would be money enough to care for him all his life, but had not expected to attain such a great age and has now exhausted his savings.

Edward Young, of Wausau, Wis., has brought an old hand forged trap, believed to be from 75 to 100 years old, to the city. Mr. Young found the trap in the roots of an overturned dead tree near Kempster while hunting and fishing in that locality. The trap is made of steel and is very rusty. A root of the tree had grown around the trap, which had been released. It is believed that the trap was placed there years ago when the Hudson Bay people worked this locality for furs.

Paul Weden, who was employed as a draughtsman in an automobile factory in Toronto, and was discharged because his loyalty was suspected, has invented a machine gun which, it is said, will fire 400 shots a minute without any visible effects of heating. Weden, with William Marshall, a promoter, conducted negotiations with the Dominion Government for some time, but the Militia Department was not disposed to enter into a contract, so Weden and Marshall took their product to American interests. It is said the St. Louis Car Company is to make a large number for Russia and France. The contract with the St. Louis Car Company, which is alleged to have Morgan backing, stipulates that none of the guns can be sold to an enemy of the Entente Allies.

If the plans of Major George W. Littlefield, the multi-millionaire banker and ranchman of Austin, Texas, do not miscarry, his 300,000-acre ranch in this part of the Texas Panhandle will be colonized with Armenians. H. A. Wroe, son-in-law of Major Littlefield and vice-president of the American National Bank of Austin, has gone to New York to confer with a representative of the Armenians who is seeking a location for the immigrants in this country. It is stated that Major Littlefield will finance the bringing over from Turkey of several thousand of them and provide them with homes on his big tract of land on the most favorable terms. All of the land is adapted for the growing of various kinds of crops and the 300,000 acres will easily accommodate 10,000 persons.

Young Fresh from 'Frisco

— OR —

THE BOY WHO BOSSSED THE MINE

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER VII (continued)

Over at the boarding-house lights were flashing in the window, and the music of a banjo could be heard.

A light burned in the office window also, and toward the little building Jack and Arthur made their way.

"Tom Barnacle is in there," whispered Arthur. "I can see his head."

They went up the steps on tiptoe, bursting in suddenly through the door.

There sat Tom Barnacle and the man, Sam Calaway, behind the railing, with a whisky bottle and glasses between them on the desk.

Barnacle staggered to his feet, his red face almost pale as he blurted out:

"Young Fr—Mr. Winton! How came you here?"

"Ah, good evening, gentlemen!" said Jack, quietly. "Yes, Young Fresh from 'Frisco has returned."

"I—I don't understand," muttered Barnacle, dropping back into the chair.

He was evidently pretty drunk, but still not enough so to be taken wholly off his guard.

"Oh, I've learned my nickname, Mr. Barnacle," laughed Jack. "Well, it's a good one. I am fresh from 'Frisco, but we 'Frisco boys give no odds to any one. By the way, I have taken the liberty of discharging one of your men."

"It is your privilege, Mr. Winton," was the thick reply.

Barnacle was clearly doing the best he could to hold himself in.

"Won't you join us in a drink?" he asked. "You must be cold after your long ride."

"Thank you, no; not now. But if you would kindly order me a bite of supper, and for Arthur, too, I'll take it upstairs in my room; then, after I have eaten, I wouldn't object to a nightcap just before I go to bed."

"It shall be done," said the superintendent. "Sam, go give the order. Now, Mr. Winton, about this man you have discharged."

"His name is Rod Bush."

"Ha! A drunken bum. I bounced him this afternoon."

"Indeed! It was time. We met him on the road, and he fired at us. He won't do it again."

Barnacle's little eyes winked hard.

"Dead?" he asked. "You killed him? Served him right, then."

"We shot the horse and sent Bush about his business."

"You were more merciful than I would have been, then. Let me congratulate you on your escape."

"Oh, it's nothing," replied Jack carelessly. "Only it

has shaken me up a bit, and I think I shall go right to bed. Arthur, you can come up and have a bite with me when the grub comes."

Having said this, Jack immediately retired to his room.

One thing at once attracted his attention which he had not particularly observed before, and which must now be very particularly described in order that what follows may be understood.

Outside the window, at a distance of about twenty feet, was a tall standpipe about as big around as the leg of a good-sized man.

This pipe was, as had been explained to Jack during the morning, connected with the old shaft, now full of water, with a connection with the new shaft as well, which could be used at pleasure.

There was a large movable nozzle attached to this standpipe, which was about opposite the upper windows of the office building.

The object of this curious apparatus was a double one.

It could be used for extinguishing fire, or for taking away the water pumped out of the mine, for directly behind the office was a rocky wall somewhat higher than the building.

Behind this again was High Rock, and between the two a narrow space of say fifteen feet in width with a slope toward the creek into which Jack had so nearly been thrown.

Thus, when it was desired to pump water from the shafts, it was thrown by the standpipe over the lower rocks, and into this natural channel, where it ran off into the creek.

Jack opened the window and was standing there looking out when Arthur came up.

"By thunder," he whispered, as he closed the door, "Barney has taken two more big hookers, and has gone out as drunk as a boiled owl. He means mischief. He said to me: 'I'll square accounts with Young Fresh. Let him look out for himself. This fight has only just begun.'"

"Huh!" said Jack, pulling down the window. "I don't care what he says. I'm not afraid."

"You're full of pluck, all right."

"I'm working for a big stake, Arthur. You have got those revolvers of Rod Bush's?"

"Sure."

"Keep them where you can lay your hands on them at short notice, then."

"You bet I will. You'll sleep with me to-night?"

"I shall start in here. You will find me sneaking into your bed after a while. Who's coming now?"

It proved to be a Chinaman over from the boarding-house with the supper.

On the tray was a small flask of whisky sent with Boss Barnacle's compliments, the Chinaman said.

The boys ate the supper and sat down for a smoke.

Arthur took up the whisky flask and smelled of its contents.

"By thunder, Jack!" he exclaimed, "take a whiff of this?"

"What's the matter?"

"Doped with laudanum, surest thing."

Jack took a long whiff.

"There is certainly opium in it," he said. "He corked the flask, and, pushing open the dividing door, stepped into Barnacle's room.

"What are you trying to do?" demanded Arthur.

"Well, I have no use for this stuff, and I'm giving it back to the man who sent it to me," replied Jack, who had placed the flask on the dresser.

"It would serve him right if he drank it, then."

The boys talked until midnight, and, hearing nothing of Barnacle, they turned in.

Jack, however, was resolved not to go to sleep.

He meant to keep a watch on the enemy until morning dawned.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP.

Arthur was a regular sleepyhead, and he was off for the Land of Nod in no time, while Jack lay there listening for Barnacle to come stumbling up the stairs.

There was no stumble.

An hour passed, and nothing had occurred.

Twice he had caught himself napping, and he began to feel doubtful.

Slipping out of bed, he crossed the passage and entered his own room.

At once he knew that he must have slept.

There lay Barnacle stretched upon the floor in a profound sleep.

"By Jove, he did get in, and I never knew," muttered Jack. "Let me take a squint at the whisky flask."

He stole into the other room.

The flask stood on the dresser half emptied.

That Barnacle had taken a dose of his own medicine was sure.

Jack began to feel alarmed.

What if the man was dead?

"I don't care! It's his own fault," he thought, as he bent over him.

Barnacle was certainly not dead, for, as Jack shook him up, he began to snore lustily.

Putting a pillow under his head, Jack retreated to the other room and crawled back into bed.

Arthur gave a great lurch and tumbled against him.

"Here! Here! Shinny on your own side!" cried Jack, giving him a push.

"Hello! What's the row?" demanded Arthur, waking then.

"There is no row, only you are trying to kick me out of bed."

"I must have dropped asleep."

"You've been asleep ever since we turned in. Barnacle is in my room dead drunk, and the bottle half empty on the dresser."

"You don't say. Is he dead?"

"Not yet, surely, for he's grunting like a pig. I guess we can safely go to sleep now."

"Glad of it," said Arthur. "I don't think I could keep awake if I tried."

He was off again in a moment, and Jack was just dropping off, too, when all at once he was brought up standing by a loud crack of glass.

Arthur awoke, too.

A rushing sound could be heard.

"Water!" cried Jack, jumping out of bed.

"Great Scott! The standpipe has broken loose!" echoed Arthur. "What can it mean?"

The boys hurried into Jack's room.

There lay Tom Barnacle, his face all cut and bleeding with broken glass, with a huge stream of water dashing against the bed full force and running down upon him.

It had already risen almost as high as the threshold.

"That was meant for me!" cried Jack. "If I was lying drugged on the bed with that stream of water dashing in my face it would beat my brains out all right."

The water started over the threshold as Jack spoke, and they had to jump to get out of the way.

"Let's put him on his own bed," said Jack. "Wet feet won't hurt us. There is more to this than appears on the surface. They haven't gone to all this trouble without some good reason. I must know what it all means."

They waded into the room, and, lifting Barnacle up between them, placed him on his own bed.

The superintendent groaned as they dropped him.

"Hark!" cried Arthur. "They are hollering out in the yard."

"Barnacle! Mr. Barnacle!" a voice shouted from below.

At the same moment there came a thunderous knocking at the lower door.

"Shall we let them in?" asked Arthur.

"Not by any means," replied Jack. "We'll jump out of the window. There is detective work to be done here tonight, and it is up to us to do it. Lively now, Arthur! All this is educational for me. Just let them wait till I get on to their curves, and these fellows will find out who is boss of this mine."

The boys bounced back into their own room and hurried on their trousers.

The balance of their clothes were thrown out of the window, which overlooked High Rock, and was invisible from any of the mine buildings.

Hanging out by his hands, Jack dropped then, and Arthur quickly followed him.

They gathered up their clothes and ran behind the barn, which was on this side.

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

CHAMPION BEE CATCHER.

James Fisk, who lives in Grafton, Cal., is the champion bee catcher of this section. Fisk is making a living by capturing stray swarms of bees, and from all indications it is a good living. He says that it is not often that he does not get one swarm a day.

BRITISH NET TRAPS U-BOAT.

The Daily Post, Liverpool, publishes a report of the capture of one of Germany's latest super-submarines, 250 feet long, and carrying, in addition to torpedo tubes, four guns of fairly large caliber. The submarine was launched at Stettin.

The Post states that within a few hours after leaving her base she was caught "in one of those traps we have so skilfully laid for these craft somewhere in the German Ocean."

LOST IN MOJAVE DESERT.

Lost in the desert, forced to crawl for miles on her hands and knees during the night and finally rescued by a railroad engineer as she lay unconscious on the tracks, were the adventures that befell Miss Louise M. Pearson, twenty-two years old, of Oakland, Cal., in the Mojave Desert.

Miss Pearson left Ludlow on horseback to locate a mine in Old Dad Mountains. Ten miles out her horse threw her. Her ankle was so severely sprained she could not walk, and the horse, carrying food supplies, raced away.

PORK AND LONGEVITY.

Do you wish to live long and be strong? Then eat pork three times a day, says Samuel Reynolds, a farmer of Columbus, Ind., who is seventy-five years old and can carry a sack of grain with the best.

Reynolds eats pork three times every day and if he wishes a little snack of something between meals he eats a piece of pork.

If he happens to need a bite of something before going to bed he eats a piece of pork. He never ate an apple in his life, and he never tasted any sort of fruit, butter or jelly.

FIRST OIL-BURNING BATTLESHIP.

The great superdreadnought Nevada sped through the seas, off Owl's Head, the other day at a rate faster than that required to admit her to the United States Navy. Driven by her oil-burning engines, the Nevada went through her builder's acceptance speed trials with a maximum showing of 21.04 knots and an average record of 20.9 knots.

Members of the Naval Trial Board said the tests were "very successful." Particularly satisfactory was the demonstration of the use of oil as fuel, as the Nevada is the first battleship to be supplied with that source of power.

SNAKE MARKET LIVELY.

Even the teetotalers are seeking snakes in Baltimore these days when they pass by the old St. Paul's Cemetery, a walled-up, abandoned graveyard at the corner of Lombard and Fremont streets. The place is infested with the reptiles, mostly of a harmless variety. They have their nests in the masses of tangled ivy and shrubbery about the tombs.

Women and children cross on the other side of the street, but the men and boys get sport out of the novelty of hunting snakes in the heart of a big city. Most of the snakes are of the garter variety. Hundreds have been killed and many captured and kept for pets. One man has started business, offering for sale "Live snakes direct from St. Paul's Cemetery."

MOUNTAIN BANDIT SHOT.

Dispatches from Ashland, Ky., say that Burke McClure, a mountain bandit, who killed his young wife and her cousin, Mrs. Gertrude Johnson, and wounded another woman and a man at Christian, W. Va., on Friday, was shot to death by deputy sheriffs at Oceana the other day and was buried in Clear Creek amid scenes of wild excitement. A large mob tried to obtain the body.

The deputies trailed McClure until he was driven to shelter in a log smokehouse on the place of Judge A. F. Centers, clerk of Wyoming County. He kept them at bay with bullet after bullet until, overcome by fatigue, he finally relaxed. One of the deputies reached the cabin and forced the door. As the bandit jumped at him with drawn revolver, the deputy shot him through the heart.

Miss Grace Justice and Charles Perry, who were shot by McClure, probably will recover.

THE GREAT SEAL.

The Great Seal of England that Lord Haldane handed to the King when he resigned the Lord Chancellorship is, says the London Chronicle, a more elaborate article than most people imagine. It costs about \$3,500 to make it, and it consists of two heavy silver plates, in one of which is cut the die for the front of the seal, and in the other, that for the back. When the seal is to be affixed to a document, a lump of wax is softened in hot water and cooled in cold water, after which it is placed between the two plates and pressed. It comes out in the shape of a disk, with an impression on each side.

Formerly there was an official attached to the seal who was as proud of his office as the Lord Chancellor was of his. That was "Chaffwax," whose sole business was to melt the wax and to take the impressions of the Great Seal as often as required. The writer remembers the last of the "Chaffwaxes," a rosy-cheeked old gentleman who lived long to enjoy the pension that a grateful country granted him for his important services. Those services are now performed by an unnamed subordinate in the Chancellor's office.

SIX WEEKS IN THE MOON

— OR —

A TRIP BEYOND THE ZENITH

By ED. KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XV (continued)

They all reached shore in safety.

Prof. Elias had halted at the water's edge to study the creatures which floated in the current not twenty-five yards away. For some inexplicable reason they did not venture to come nearer the shore.

"There is surely no analogous species on the earth," said the savant, decisively.

"What do you call them, professor?" asked the boys.

"Immense saurians of a species not classified on our sphere," replied Prof. Elias. "I should say they were a cross between an alligator and a hippopotamus."

"Well," said Dick, with a deep breath, "I think we have good reasons for congratulating ourselves upon a very narrow and lucky escape."

"Amen!" declared Ned.

But that don't exactly let us out of the *scrape*," declared Prof. Elias. "How are we going to get across this river?"

This was a sticker, to be sure.

The three baffled swimmers sat down on the peaty shore and gave themselves up to thought.

The warmth of the sun's rays had soon dried their wet skins and clothing. Then they proceeded to dress.

The two ravenous saurians yet floated upon the current as if expecting their escaped victims to come back.

Ned was tempted at sight of them, and drew out his pistol.

"I'm going to see what effect a bullet would have upon them," he cried, and then fired.

The bullet struck the first creature in its eye. There was a hoarse bellow and a tremendous commotion in the water. Then it sank from view.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Dick. "I really believe you killed it, Ned!"

"It looks like it," agreed Ned. "I must have hit just the right spot."

Professor Elias had gone on some distance along the shore. He shouted to the boys now.

"Come on, boys!" he cried. "There is no other way but to go on until we find some way to cross over."

"All right," cried Dick. "Come on, Ned. That is our best way."

So all set out along the river bank to find, if possible, a safe method of crossing.

It did not seem as if this was going to be an easy matter. They kept on for miles.

But the long day of forty-eight hours had been so full

of exciting events and trying incidents that all were nearly exhausted.

Darkness was close at hand, and it was decided to camp for the night. At this juncture a strange discovery was made.

They were approaching a headland which jutted out into the river, when a thin column of apparent smoke was seen ascending above it. It caused them to come to a startled halt.

"A campfire!" exclaimed Ned.

"No!" said Elias, positively, "it is not smoke. See, the body is not heavy enough. It is vapor."

"A geyser!" suggested Dick.

"Perhaps so. It is certainly steam, from whatever source it may come. Let us go forward."

So forward they pressed, and the next moment, turning the headland, a scene was presented to their view which gave all a great start.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Dick, "did you ever see the beat of that?"

Spellbound, all gazed upon the spectacle before them. The Hot Valley of the Yellowstone was as nothing beside this land of geysers and boiling lakes on the surface of the moon.

Scores of miles were in that bubbling, hissing, boiling and thundering area. Words cannot describe it. It seemed like a hissing Hades.

As far as the eye could reach the air was full of clouds of steam, of columns of boiling water in furious escape from subterranean depths.

Elias took a few steps forward to inspect a boiling basin near at hand. The two boys, Ned and Dick, were horror-stricken at the catastrophe which followed.

Suddenly the ground beneath Elias sank and he vanished beneath the surface in a furious cloud of steam which surrounded his companions and rendered them utterly unable to go to his rescue.

CHAPTER XVI.

DICK GETS INTO TROUBLE.

Like a flash Elias had vanished from the view of the boys. At the same moment the cloud of steam so enveloped them that they were powerless to act.

Dick clutched Ned's arm, and groaned in horror:

"My soul! the professor has gone to his death!"

"Gone!" echoed Ned, hollowly. "What shall we do?"

"Heaven only knows."

"How can we aid him? We must do something!"

And in the extremity of the moment the boys began to grope hopelessly about and shout the professor's name.

For some moments this sort of thing continued and they were in horrible suspense.

Then a strong current of air suddenly dispelled the steam cloud, and objects once more became visible.

Then they saw a great orifice at their very feet.

Its sides were covered with a shiny substance like porcelain, and it was fully a dozen feet in depth. It was like a huge porcelain kettle buried in the soil, and at the bottom of it they saw——

Joy of joys! Not boiling water as they had feared, but the professor himself trying to keep his footing on the slippery surface. He was quite unharmed.

"Cracky!" cried Ned, "there he is, Dick, O. K. and right side up. Hello, professor! Are you alive?"

"Hello, boys!" returned the savant, joyfully. "Is that you?"

"It is. We thought you were done for."

"Well, I thought myself that I was bound for the center of the moon. But are you all right?"

"As sound as nuts!"

"Good! How am I going to get out of here?"

"Wait and we will help you."

"I wish you would."

Being fully twelve feet to the bottom of the geyser chamber, the boys could not reach a hand down to assist Elias up.

But Dick pulled off his coat and Ned did the same. Tying the sleeves together, they lowered the improvised rope down into the cavity.

The professor took the hint and caught on. The next moment the boys dragged him out of the dilemma and the geyser hole at the same time.

Then there was mutual rejoicing.

It had been a close call for Elias, for had the chamber been, as usual, full of water, instead of steam, there would have been a parboiled savant in the party at once.

The three adventurers took great care now to avoid any more such traps.

They made their way along the edge of the hot valley deeply impressed with the scene.

At length they halted near a little boiling spring, and here it was decided to make camp.

Dick and Ned went into the forest and shot some birds which were akin to pheasants. These were dressed and boiled to a turn in the heated water of the spring.

A salt lick was found quite near, and a quantity of this made the chicken quite toothsome, so that they retired to rest with the double assurance of a full stomach and a clear conscience.

Darkness had shut down with the regular artillery-like boom of thunder which always announced the close of the moon-day.

Our friends slept well until the sun rose once more and awakened them.

Dick was the first astir, and had a smoking repast ready for the others when they awoke.

This was disposed of, and the spirits of the three adventurers arose. They felt equal now to any emergency.

Of course their prime idea was still to find a way to cross the big river and return to the Moonbeam. They were getting a bit short of ammunition, and, on the whole, wanted to make sure that the airship was yet in its position where they had left it.

For aught they knew some other tribe of moon natives might have come across it, and confiscated, if not destroyed, it.

So they decided to leave the hot valley and cut across the country to cross the big river, if such the body of water proved to be, and then return to the shore of the Lunar Sea.

Prof. Elias set his course, and they set forth.

Climbing the heights which overlooked the hot valley, they had a delightful view of the country about. Many strange sights were seen.

The heights sloped away on the other side to a mighty forest. It was not deemed necessary, however, to make their way through this.

A chance was seen to skirt it, and this they proceeded to do.

The verge of the forest was alive with many strange species of game. But the travelers paid little heed to this fact. There were other subjects of a more serious nature confronting them.

A good outlook was kept for a possible foe, either man or beast, and in this manner they made many miles before the sun recorded the hour of noon.

Then they halted in the shadow of a curious tree somewhat resembling a banyan turned upside-down. It did not take them long to find material for a fire and another pheasant was devoured.

But the heat was something frightful. Such torrid temperature was exceedingly wilting to the visitors from the earth who knew so little about the usages of life in the moon.

"By the shades of Aristotle!" exclaimed Elias. "I'm not going to travel further in such a hot sun. Let us wait until later in the day."

"So say I!" agreed Ned.

So they camped in the shadow of the foliage and waited for the heat to pass away. There was something balmy and soothing in the lunar atmosphere, and in a few moments every one of them felt sleepy.

"On my word," yawned Elias, "I can hardly keep my eyes open. I believe I'll take a nap. Wake me up in about twenty minutes, boys."

The next moment the savant was unconscious. Ned also gave way to drowsiness, but Dick threw off the inclination and said:

"I'm not going to give way to it. I believe I'll do a little exploring around here on my own account."

So he shook off the drowsy feeling, and, rising, walked out upon the open plateau. The heat was terrific, but he did not flinch.

A short distance away he came to a purling stream. The blood-red water rolled over the stones like oil. Little fish swam in the pools.

(To be continued)

TIMELY TOPICS

The Ottawa (Canada) Electric Railway Company has maintained clocks in its street cars for twenty-four years. These are small wall clocks of Connecticut manufacture. They are regulated twice a day, and the Ottawa public finds them a great convenience.

The War Department has named a board of general officers to consider enlarging the capacity of the Military Academy at West Point. Major-General Scott, Brigadier-Generals Bliss, Crowder, McCain, Colonel Clarence T. Townsley, superintendent of the academy, and Captain Douglas MacArthur, of the general staff, will consider what extensions should be made to provide for a large number of students and officers.

Mrs. Janet MacDonald, seventy-seven years old, of Boothbay Harbor, Me., is about to retire wealthy, after twenty years in the business of seal catching, with three men in her employ. The seals of Maine waters are not valuable for their skins, but are easily tamed and are in demand for public and private collections and aquariums and zoological collections. The catching is done at night, with the aid of nets, and Mrs. MacDonald has caught many personally. Often they follow her about the house several days after capture. The usual price is \$25, and her catch has averaged 100 in a season of six weeks in the late spring and summer.

Apples plucked from the oldest apple tree on the Pacific coast, in Vancouver Barracks, Wash., have been sent to the Department of Agriculture by A. A. Quarnberg, former horticulture inspector of this district. The famous tree is almost ninety years old and produced a fair crop of apples this year. The department will make reproductions of these apples in size, shape and color, and these will be returned and later turned over to the Washington and Oregon Historical societies, with photographs of the old tree and its history.

The Canadian Government gave out a statement recently of the expenditures on account of the war which says: "Canada's war expenditure for next year will be very large. About \$1,000 per man is calculated as the cost of raising, equipping and maintaining our troops at the front and under arms in Canada. In this war the estimate probably will be exceeded on account of the enormous expenditures of ammunition and the heavy strain upon artillery and rifles. Canada's war expenditure next year, on the basis of a force of 250,000 men, will aggregate from \$200,000,000 to \$250,000,000. The interest charges in connection with this and past war expenditures will amount to over \$15,000,000 a year.

Two English pheasants shot out of season cost Dr. J. Corwin Mabey, of Montclair, N. J., \$200. Dr. Mabey and the Rev. Dr. Thomas Travis, pastor of Watchung Ave-

nue Congregational Church, were hunting snipe in the Troy Meadows, near Hanover, when the two birds were flushed. The doctor, who was walking ahead, not stopping to determine the species of the birds, fired on the impulse of the moment. Shortly after State Warden Wm. E. Young and Deputy Warden John J. Mitchell of Troy Hills, told the huntsmen they had violated the game laws, inasmuch as it was forbidden to shoot pheasants except between Nov. 10 and Dec. 15. Dr. Mabey and Dr. Travis went voluntarily to the office of Justice of the Peace Leo F. Kitchell of Hanover, where Dr. Mabey admitted he shot the birds. Justice Kitchell then imposed the fine. Dr. Mabey said he would appeal the case to the State Game and Fish Association on the ground that the fine was excessive.

A neutral traveler says activity at the various Zeppelin centers is now greater than at any previous period of the war. At Berlin new sheds are being erected, while at Friedrichshaven, Hamburg, and Wilhelmshaven all work is being pushed forward with feverish haste. The chief aim is, of course, to get at England, but the Germans claim that both in the North Sea and in the Baltic the scouting work of the airships has been invaluable. They believe that in anything like decent weather it is impossible for enemy craft, either battleships or submarines, to approach Germany without due warning, and they claim they have sunk Russian submarines and have harried enemy merchant shipping. The Germans are convinced they did more damage in London than has been admitted, and they say their experience has been such that they hope to do a great deal more. At any rate, they are building new airships with great speed, especially for work over England, which they think has no means of countering their moves in the air.

Firemen on the Cunard Line steamship *Saxonia*, scheduled to depart the other day from Liverpool for New York, refused to sail on the vessel if 900 "Irish would-be shirkers of military age" were permitted on board. The Cunard officials, after a brief meeting, upheld the firemen and refused permission to sail to all British of military age. It was stated that the same course would be followed in future on all Cunard liners, and that it was hoped other lines would follow the same procedure. Five of the detained men afterward enlisted. The arrival of the Irishmen in Liverpool drew a crowd outside the steamship offices. Two of the Irishmen were knocked down by women. Others were set upon and decorated with white feathers. Ignoring cries of "Cowards! Traitors!" and refusing to listen to the appeals of recruiting sergeants, the Irishmen marched to the dock. When they arrived there the *Saxonia*'s firemen, witnessing the street encounters and catching the spirit of the crowd, informed the steamship company they would not leave with the *Saxonia* if the Irishmen were permitted to sail.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

A large red fox was found in a schoolhouse in Johnson Township, Nashville, Ind., by the teacher, Charles Winters, when he opened the door the other morning. Hounds had chased the fox all night and it had jumped through the schoolhouse window. The fox was not killed, but kept a prisoner until it could be viewed by the children. Later it was released.

The medicine chest on large vessels is like a closet or cupboard, with a glass door, built in the ship. In this chest the medicine bottles, gilt labeled, are arranged on shelves that rise one above another in receding tiers. It is practically a well-appointed little drug store. There is supplied with the medicine chest a book explaining the uses of the medicines, the proper doses, the effects, etc.

Among the stories of heroism that marked the wreck of a Union Pacific motor car near Randolph, Kan., the act of an unidentified legless man stands out as one of the most remarkable rescues on record. The legless man was hurled from the wrecked car into the river, where Mabel Dennilinger, aged five, of Frankfort, Kan., was floundering about in the water. The man tore strips from his clothing, tied the child to himself and swam to the shore.

The United States Coast and Geodetic Survey has just awarded a contract for the construction of a 1,000-ton steamer, to be used in surveying the dangerous waters of Alaska and Bering Sea. The vessel, which is to be named the Surveyor, will accommodate a crew of 66 officers and men and will cost, with her equipment, \$220,000. Strange to say, the construction of this vessel, destined for service in Alaska, has been undertaken by a firm at Manitowoc, Wis., on Lake Michigan.

Crabtree Farm, near Chicago, was the scene of unusual activity recently, when Mrs. Scott Durand learned that State Veterinarian Dyson and his men were planning to kill her herd of prize cattle. She telephoned to her husband, who was at the Onwentsia Club golf links at Lake Forest. Then she armed the farm employees. "I shall shoot the first person who attempts to harm any of my cattle," she declared. "I have a revolver of my own and I

intend to use it. I have been informed that the State inspectors are planning to invade my farm. When they arrive they will find me prepared. Attorney-General Lucey promised me my herd would not be molested until a commission had examined them. Now I understand he is going to disregard this promise. It is a perfect outrage. It is contemptible the tricks these inspectors and their allies have resorted to in order to make trouble for me. They know just as well as I do that there has not been a trace of the foot and mouth disease among any of my herd since last September." In the meantime, Mrs. Durand is conferring with her lawyer regarding legal proceedings to frustrate the threatened raid.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

One of the most discouraging things in the world is to see a talkative barber shaving a deaf-mute.

"Do you know anything about the language of flowers?" "Only this much: A \$5 box of roses talks a heap louder to a girl than a 50-cent bunch of carnations."

The Housewife—Why, see here, aren't you one of the tramps to whom I gave a pie last April? **Weary Walkins**—Yes, ma'am. You gave it to t'ree of us. I'm de survivor.

"My wife made me a success," remarked the man. "I am glad to hear you say that," declared his pastor. "Yes; she has always wanted so many things that I've just had to hustle."

"Henry," said Mrs. Spender, "I dreamed last night that you bought me a new hat." "Well," replied her husband, "that's the first dream of a hat you ever had that didn't cost me money."

"Have you anything to say before I pass sentence?" "Yes, Your Honor. I would call your attention to the fact that the fool lawyer who defended me was assigned to the case by yourself."

Lady—You are the worst-looking tramp I ever saw! **Soapy Sam**—Madam, it is the precincts of uncommon luvliness wot makes me look so 'orrible. **Lady**—Jane, give this poor man something to eat.

Stranger—Pardon me, madam; out here on this historic battlefield you are weeping. **Woman**—Ah, me! My husband fought in this battle. **Stranger**—I see. And he was killed? **Woman**—No, he lived, and I married him.

Mother—It shocks me awfully to think you took the penny. Remember, it is as much a sin to steal a penny as a dollar. Now, how do you feel, Willie? **Willie**—Like a chump. There was a dollar right alongside the penny.

Little Bobbie listened with deep interest to the story of the Prodigal Son. At the end of it he burst into tears. "Why, what's the matter, Bobbie?" exclaimed his mother. "I'm—I'm so sor-ry for that poor li'l' ca-alf," he sobbed. "He didn't do nuffin'!"

A POLITE ROAD AGENT.

By Alexander Armstrong

Captain Long, an army officer, was staging it between Julesburg and Cheyenne before the railroad connected the two. The through passengers numbered seven, being five men and two ladies, the latter being the wives of two of the passengers. He was the only military man aboard. The two married men were Easterners, who were going to Cheyenne to set up in mercantile business. One of the others was an artist and correspondent for a New York illustrated paper, and the fifth was a stockman.

It was but natural that they should soon strike up a speaking acquaintance, and the natural result of this was a general conversation about stage robbers.

Those chaps were pretty numerous at that time, and the chances were at least even on the coach being held up before the end of the journey.

People who regard themselves in peril often become communicative. These had not been traveling half a day before it was known that the two mercantile men had about \$16,000 in greenbacks, and all but \$200 was concealed in the bosoms of their wives. The artist had \$150 in the lining of his cap and \$30 in his wallet. The stockman had \$100 in his wallet, and his bootlegs jammed full of greenbacks. Long had \$80 in his pocket and not a dollar elsewhere. The fact of his being an army officer will satisfy all inquiries as to why he didn't have more.

The next thing was to expect the stage to be stopped, and to plan what they would do.

They had all read and heard of such affairs, but no one had been through the mill.

The five men each had a trusty revolver, and it was hardly to be expected that they should permit themselves to be robbed by one or two men.

It was arranged that in case the stage was stopped the ladies should sink down out of harm's way and give the men a chance to show their mettle. As a matter of course they depended on the driver to help them out as best he could.

It was about half an hour before sundown, and they were skirting the cottonwoods along the north fork of the upper Platte, when the driver suddenly pulled up. They looked out to see what had happened, and a man opened the right-hand door of the coach and looked in on them. He was about thirty years of age, light hair, blue eyes, sandy beard and regular features. Indeed, he was a good-looking man. His dress was half hunter, half gentleman, and he looked clean and tasty. He had a cocked revolver in his right hand, and his left held the door open.

"One—three—five—seven," he counted. "Ladies and gentlemen, I am extremely sorry to put you to any trouble, but I shall have to request you to alight. That is, the gentlemen will please step out, while the ladies can remain in the coach."

They had planned how they were to open fire and riddle the fellow with bullets. Here he was and not one of the men made a move. Why? Well, it seemed as if those blue eyes kept close watch on every man's hand.

The captain relates that his first thought was to 'slip

his hand down to his revolver, but the instant his arm moved the fellow seemed to cover him, saying:

"Gentlemen, I hope I shall not be obliged to shoot any of you. Please come out."

It's no use to say they were a set of cowards, for such was far from being the case.

They were packed in the coach like sardines, no one prepared to shoot, and it takes time to draw a revolver and make ready.

It is probable that if any of them had attempted it, there would have been a tragedy.

The captain was on the front seat, and he hoped that as he rose up to leave the coach he might draw his weapon unobserved, but the agent had been there before.

The artist was the first one down, and his revolver was taken as he reached the ground, and he was ordered to "stand over there."

Each one was disarmed the same way, and the pistols of all were flung under the coach.

While no one could say the driver stood in with the agent, he certainly acted a contemptible part.

He had stopped the coach at a gesture, and now sat on his seat with face entirely free from anxiety. He was armed with two revolvers, and he could have easily shot the agent through the head, as the latter gave him no attention whatever.

"Well, there stood the five men in line, and the agent surveyed them and said:

"I must have five thousand dollars out of this crowd. Captain, place your money on the ground. Watches and rings I don't care for, and none of you seem to have any diamonds."

One threw his wallet down in contempt, and the others followed suit. The agent picked them up, selected out the greenbacks, and, upon counting up the sum total, he laughed merrily and observed:

"This crowd must be looking for a poorhouse. Now, gents, no more fooling. There's money here, and I'm going to have it. If it isn't in your pockets, it's in the coach. If it isn't in the coach, the ladies have got it. Shell out, or I'll search every one of you."

"You have got my last dollar, and may the bills burn you," said the captain as the agent stood waiting for him to hand over some more.

"No hard feelings, captain," he replied as he turned to the next. Every man in the line denied that he had any more money, and for a moment the agent seemed nonplussed. Then he backed up to the open door of the stage, leaving them about ten feet away, and still covered with his revolver.

"Ladies," he said in a voice as soft as a girl's, "I didn't mean to trouble you, but I've had such poor luck outside that I must request a contribution. Please hand out the money you are carrying for these gentlemen."

The women were terribly frightened, and both at once started to comply with the order.

The husbands saw ruin staring them in the face, and the one next to the captain, whose name was Travers, breathed so hard that all could hear him.

Suddenly, as if shot from a cannon, and with the agent still covering them, Travers sprang forward. He made

just two jumps to cover the distance. The revolver cracked and the bullet cut a lock of hair from his head; but the next instant he had seized the barrel with his right hand, the man's throat with his left, and was crying for help. All gave it fast enough, and inside of two minutes had the fellow disarmed and bound.

It was a wonder some of them were not killed, for he fired every chamber in the revolver.

His struggles, too, were terrific, and it was not until the artist picked up one of the weapons and belabored him over the head with the butt of it that he then grew quiet.

The first move was to search him and get the money, and divide it accordingly as they had contributed.

He took matters very coolly when he realized that he was helpless, saying that they were no gentlemen to use him so roughly, and calling attention to the fact that he could have shot every one of them.

They were binding him more securely when a detachment of cavalry came up and he was turned over to them as a prisoner. He was taken to a camp near Julesburg, but within a week he made a desperate break and secured his freedom.

He came within an ace of securing the biggest haul of the year.

The women had, as has been related, \$15,800 hidden away, and every dollar of this was ready to be passed out to him when Travers interrupted the programme.

"I have," said the captain, in conclusion, "fought Indians, skirmished with grizzlies, hunted down outlaws, and had my share of adventures with rattlesnakes, but this was the only time I was ever boxed up and made a fool of, and it has always been a raw spot in my record."

WHERE PEARLS COME FROM.

Many of the finest pearls in the world come from the little cluster of islands in the Philippines known as the Sulu group, says *Youth's Companion*.

The crew of a Sulu pearl schooner contains from seven to ten men, who may be Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Moros or East Indiamen. The Japanese is usually the diver, while the others sail the boat, haul the nets, sort the shells, and do the cooking and washing.

The diver is looked up to by all the others. He usually wears a modern diving suit. When he has found a promising-looking lot of shells, he gives a signal, on which others lower a net, which he fills with the shells.

The shells are about a foot in diameter, rough, and of a somber drab color. It does not take many hundred to fill a net or many netfuls to make a cargo. When the pearler makes port, the pearls are listed and graded according to size, shape and luster, and are sent by way of Singapore or Manila to London, the best pearl market in the world.

Shells are often barren of pearls, and voyage after voyage may be made with little or no result; but the expenses of the voyage are small, and one successful voyage pays the expenses of nine or ten unsuccessful ones, and leaves a handsome profit besides. The fishermen think

they are faring well if each man has an allowance of 5 cents a day for fish and rice.

In Japan, pearl-hunting becomes systematic pearl-farming. The Japanese have discovered or planted a great many beds of pearl oysters, especially on the eastern coast of the island of Honshu. The Bay of Ago is particularly popular with the pearl farmers because it contains many landlocked coves, where the water is never disturbed by storms. The climatic conditions also are perfect, and the oysters multiply prodigiously.

In the early spring the pearl farmer deposits small flat stones in the shallow coves for the oyster spawn to attach itself to.

In November the spats, stones and all, are removed to places where the water has a depth of at least twelve feet, for the shallow water freezes quickly. The baby oyster remains in moderately deep water, undisturbed, until it reaches the age of three years, when it is transferred to another section of the oyster bed.

At this time the pearl farmer pries the shell gently apart and puts in the "nucleus," which is a tiny pellet of stone. He then replaces the oyster in the water, still fastened to the stone. On the pellet, or nucleus, form the pearl deposits, layer after layer.

After being transferred to the second section, the young oyster is left to itself for four years. Then, at seven years, it is ready to yield the pearl of great price. Unfortunately a great many oysters, in spite of all the care that is taken with them, prove barren.

But even the barren oysters are not wholly without value; the mother-of-pearl, or inner lining of the shell, can be sold, although, of course, it is worth only a fraction of what a pearl would bring. Mother-of-pearl is used principally in making buttons and in inlaying work. The Chinese and Japanese use a great deal of it on teakwood trays, taborets, boxes and so forth.

BIG GUN SILENCER.

Several things give away the position of a big gun when it is fired, the two chief being the noise and the smoke, says the *Yorkshire Weekly Post*. Thanks to smokeless powder, however, the latter has practically been done away with.

The silencing of a big gun is a more difficult problem, and, though in the case of rifles and small guns the report can be made almost negligible, the gigantic rush of gases when a big shell is fired prevents a complete silencing.

A silencer which the French are using is so effective that no sound of firing can be heard over a greater distance than a hundred yards or so.

The silencer is attached to the muzzle of the gun. As the shell leaves the gun, a small shutter springs up and prevents the explosive gases escaping in the usual way. It is the sudden fierce rush of the gas which causes the "bang" when a gun is fired.

The gas passes out through the two channels with nothing like the rush that is caused in the ordinary way. It is impossible to stop the gases escaping altogether, for the pressure is so terrific that the gun would be blown to pieces.

NEWS OF THE DAY

LAID 343 EGGS IN 343 DAYS.

With his pet Minorca hen, "Queen Elizabeth," W. S. Geremeyer, of Carlisle, Pa., claims to have beaten the world's egg-laying record recently established by "Lady Eglantine" at Delaware College. "Queen Elizabeth," he asserts, laid 343 eggs in 343 consecutive days. The best "Lady Eglantine" did is put at 314 eggs in 365 days. Geremeyer and his wife certify to the correctness of this count. "Queen Elizabeth" is said to have begun laying on Nov. 4, 1914, and stopped on Oct. 13, 1915, laying an egg a day during that time. Two other fowls of the same brood are said to have laid 328 eggs in the same time.

"Queen Elizabeth" is a small bird of Black Minorca strain with a trace of Rhode Island Red and weighs about four pounds.

NEW MILITARY AEROPLANES.

Eight tractors of the new Curtiss military type were recently delivered at the army aeronautic station at San Diego, Cal., says Popular Mechanics. This not only represents the largest order for machines that has ever been filled for the Government by one designer, but also the largest shipment that has been received at a Government aerial station at one time. The new machines are graceful in appearance and have shapely streamline bodies. Each is equipped with a 100-horsepower domestic motor rated to give the craft a speed of approximately seventy miles an hour. The wings have a spread of 37 feet, and are braced for heavy work and hard usage. Each machine is designed to carry a pilot and observer and a sufficient store of fuel for a six-hour flight. In the opinion of the War Department, as previously expressed, the craft compare throughout very favorably with most of the reconnaissance machines that are now used by various armies in the European war.

WALKS OUT WITH \$9,700.

When the Bronx Borough Bank, New York, was crowded with depositors the other day, just at the closing hour, a thief pushed one hand through the paying teller's window and got a small package containing \$9,700 in cash. He then left the building unnoticed.

The robbery was undetected until the bank had been closed. Then William F. Germain, the cashier, ordered all the doors locked and a thorough search made. When that revealed nothing, the Bronx Detective Bureau was notified and a squad of detectives rushed to the bank. Each employee was subjected to a grilling examination and the fact was established that the theft was committed by an outsider.

The bank is one of the oldest in the northern section of the city, and numbers among its depositors some of the wealthiest citizens of the Bronx. C. Adelbert Becker, its president, said he had not the least clew as to the thief. According to him, the money was in a small bundle, and was made up of \$100 and \$50 bills.

TO TRY TO FLY TO NEW YORK FROM TORONTO.

"Flying alone in an eighty-mile-an-hour machine, Victor Carlstrom will try to fly from Toronto to New York," says the Toronto Sunday World. "The distance is over 350 miles. He will take advantage of the first fine day."

Carlstrom is one of the instructors at the Curtiss school at Long Branch, and the machine he will use is an R-2, a type supplied in big quantities to the two British air services, and made in Canada, except for the engine. The aeroplane has a spread of forty feet and 170 horse power, and is especially equipped for long-distance work.

Carlstrom will carry fifteen gallons of gasoline, enough for eight hours, and expects to land at Governor's Island. If successful in getting to New York, it is not unlikely that he will essay the flight back.

"The flight," said J. A. D. McCurdy of the Curtiss Company, "will be made to fully satisfy ourselves that this type of machine is capable of this extraordinary effort. As a duration no-stop-across-country trip, it will top all the records made on this continent."

The best duration flight made on this side of the Atlantic was that of W. C. Robinson, who flew from Des Moines, Iowa, to Kentland, Ind., on Oct. 17, 1914. He covered 332 miles without a stop.

LIFEBOAT TO CIRCLE GLOBE.

The Safety First, a lifeboat cruiser anchored in the Hudson River off the house of the Columbia Yacht Club, has started on a trip around the world, according to Capt. O. L. Cosgrove.

The Safety First was built by the Holmes Motor Company of West Mystic, Conn., as a non-sinkable lifeboat, to cruise on one load of fuel for a distance of 5,500 miles and in an emergency carry 100 passengers or more. It was originally known as the S. O. S., but its name was changed at the direction of Government officials, because the lifeboat carries a wireless outfit, and the signature of S. O. S. to messages might be taken for the sea call for help.

The lifeboat is to go up the Hudson River and then take the Erie Canal to the Great Lakes, reaching the Mississippi by the Chicago drainage channel and going down to New Orleans. It is then to go to San Francisco by way of the Panama Canal. Captain Cosgrove said he would go to Hawaii, then to the South Sea Islands, back again to Hawaii, thence to Australia, Japan, Madagascar, and by way of the Suez Canal or the Cape of Good Hope to England. From England it is intended to cross the Atlantic to New York. Captain Cosgrove said the trip would take from eighteen to thirty-six months. He will be accompanied by his wife and two seamen, Joseph Jesiek and Richard Landman, both Hollanders.

The Safety First is 36 feet 6 inches long, with a beam of 8 feet 4 inches, and looks much like an ordinary motor boat. It has an iron keel weighing 2,000 pounds. Its normal speed is between nine and ten knots.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

RUNS MOTOR AT 100.

Daniel McClane, a hardy Scotchman, who was married at the age of fifty-nine years and has eleven children and a number of grandchildren, celebrated his centennial in Burlingame, Cal., by learning to drive an automobile.

With a hundred years behind him, but still hale and hearty, the old man attracted much attention as he scorched through the streets of the town at the wheel of a motor car belonging to his daughter, Mrs. D. T. Ambrose.

McClane came to California during the gold rush and has been a resident of Lassen County for many years. He came here for the celebration of his one hundredth birthday.

"Whoop!" exclaimed the centenarian, returning from his joy ride. "I never knew that when I was at the helm of a sailing ship seventy-five years ago I'd be running a craft like this!"

LOOK FOR BIG PROFITS.

During the last two or three years many American speculators in San Antonio, El Paso, Laredo, Eagle Pass and other towns close to the border laid up big hoards of Mexican silver coins, principally the peso, at the prevailing low prices.

In some instances the peso was bought in large quantities as low as 38 cents on the United States dollar, which was 12 cents below its ordinary fixed value. The holders of this Mexican money expect to realize large profits on their investments as soon as the new Carranza Government is established.

The demand for the Mexican peso was so great among the border speculators that large purchases of the coin were made in China, where it has long been a circulating medium, and the silver was shipped back here and is being held by the buyers.

The holders of Carranza currency also expect to realize large profits on their investments. On the other hand, the speculators who pinned their faith to Villa stand to lose all they put into his war money, which is now regarded as practically worthless.

SAILED 400 MILES ON OPEN BOAT IN PACIFIC.

Cable advices recently from Midway Island, South Pacific, told of the complete wreck of the sailing schooner O. M. Kellogg on Maro reef Sept. 25 and the landing on Midway Island of Capt. Lunn and the crew of twenty-five intact. Midway Island is about 400 miles west of the reef struck by the vessel.

The O. M. Kellogg, owned by Atkins, Uroll & Co., of San Francisco, left Apia, Samoa, Sept. 6, loaded with copra for San Francisco.

The story of the fortunate escape of the crew of the schooner was told following the arrival of the members of the crew with Capt. Lunn and his wife.

They had been afloat on the open Pacific in a small boat and in a sloop which they borrowed on a neighboring island for the better part of two weeks.

The schooner, bound from Samoa to San Francisco, struck on Maro reef on Sept. 25. An attempt by the crew to float the vessel was at first successful, but afterward she dragged her anchor and drove hard on the reef. The crew, including the captain and his wife, left in two boats Sept. 26 for Laysan Island, northeast of Maro reef. On the way, they were compelled to abandon the smaller boat, all hands crowding into the larger one.

The shipwrecked party reached Laysan Island in two days and remained on the island for six days. Then they borrowed a small sloop from its owner in Laysan Island and sailed for Midway Island Oct. 4.

RAISING GOLDFISH.

Ten acres of goldfish bring Eugene Catte, of Langdon, Kan., more ready cash annually than is cleaned up on the average 160-acre farm. But raising and marketing ten acres of goldfish is no lazy man's job. In fact, Mr. Catte puts in as many days' work in a year as does the average farmer. His working season, however, differs from that of the farmer.

His heavy work begins in the fall, just about the time the heavy farm work is over for the season, and it lasts all winter. Wading in water hip deep during the winter months and sorting fish with the bare hands are some of the inconveniences suffered by the goldfish producer.

For many years Mr. Catte has operated a private hatchery in Reno County, near the little town of Langdon. He took up a homestead near the foot of the sand hills, some of the land being covered with bogs and springs.

He built one pond and stocked it with fish, expecting to sell them on the market. Soon there came a demand for small fish for ponds and creeks, and he quit raising for the market and went into the regular hatchery business.

He gradually enlarged his hatchery until now it covers thirteen acres and is composed of fifteen ponds. The industry grew to such proportions that Mr. Catte has turned his grain farm over to his son and now devotes his time exclusively to the production of fish.

For some years he raised game fish and shipped them all over the West. Notwithstanding that nearly every State has a fish hatchery which supplies small fish for its streams, ponds and lakes free of cost, Mr. Catte has had no trouble disposing of his hatch. He still supplies hundreds of ponds in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Nebraska with game fish. He sells direct to the Nebraska Fish Department and also to the Federal Government.

"I have found that there is more money in goldfish than game fish," said he, "and I am gradually working into that line. When a pond is filled with game fish once, that ends it. One must be looking for new customers all the time for game fish. But it is different with goldfish. You can get regular customers for them."

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